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A Dissertation Presented

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PREFACE

Historians have analyzed the Western response to Soviet Russia from a number of vantage points.[1] Surprisingly, however, the attitudes of one important political group have not been studied adequately. Historians have claimed frequently that British Conservatives were violently hostile toward the "bogey" of Bolshevism and that, therefore, Tory governments were persistently hostile toward Soviet Russia.[2] Conservatives dominated British politics during the interwar period and played a major role in formulating Western policy toward the Bolsheviks. Thus an analysis of Tory views will help to explain the origins of the long-standing estrangement between Soviet Russia and the West. But this study also will demonstrate that there was no monolithic Tory response and that Tory opinions often shifted. Moreover,

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[1]Arnold Toynbee, et al., The Impact of the Russian Revolution, 1917-1967: the Influence of Bolshevism on the World Outside Russia (London, 1967), and E. H. Carr, The Soviet Impact on the Western World (New York, 1947) take a panoramic viewpoint. E. Malcolm Carroll, Soviet Communism and Western Opinion, 1919-1921, ed. by Frederic Hollyday (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1965) offers an intensive study within a brief time period. Peter Filene, Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917-1933 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), concentrates on opinions within a selected country. Stephen Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1924 (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), analyzes the response of a single interest group.

[2]E.g., W. N. Medlicott, British Foreign Policy since Versailles, 1919-1963 (London, 1968), p. 2.

the Soviet question was, on occasion, almost as contentious an issue for the Tories as it was for the Labour party. For some Conservatives, dislike of Communism as an ideology was tempered at times by a desire to make accommodations with the Russian Communist state.

As it is today, the Tory party during the interwar period was composed of three distinct groups: the parliamentary party, the local constituency associations which formed the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, and the Conservative and Unionist Central Office.[3] Whether as Prime Minister or as leader of the Opposition, the party leader had supreme authority. He guided party policy and appointed the top officials of the Central Office. In office he chose the Cabinet; in opposition he chose the shadow Cabinet. Although the leader's powers were almost dictatorial, he could not ignore the sentiments of his followers.

Tories could influence their leader in several ways. The parliamentary Conservative Members' Committee (often called the 1922 Committee, after the year of its formation) was a sounding board for the backbenchers' views. If backbenchers disliked a certain policy, the Prime Minister tried to convert them. If unsuccessful he

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[3]This analysis of the Tory party structure is based on R. T. McKenzie, British Political Parties: the Distribution of Power Within the Conservative and Labour Parties (2d ed.; New York, 1963), pp. 21-296.

often modified his proposal; when he did not, backbenchers could rally party support through the press and by meetings. But because of the tradition of party loyalty, few conflicts were aired in public. When, for example, a group of backbenchers publicly rebuked their leader's Russian policy in the mid-1920's, it was deplored as open rebellion. The constituency association resolutions presented at the Annual Conferences of the National Union informed the party leader of local sentiments. Although not obliged to adopt them, he could not easily dismiss strong motions. Powerful pressure from the National Union sometimes did influence him. The National Union, however, had no control over the parliamentary party. The Central Office, the third of the three Tory organizations, was concerned primarily with operating an efficient party organization. Because it was the personal machine of the leader, it had no independent role in policy formulation. The propaganda literature of the Central Office's publicity department touched only on general policy.

When the Tories were in power, a serious division of Cabinet opinion usually was resolved either through the resignation of the dissidents or by a change in the leader's policy. But in the 1920's a few Tory Cabinet members publicly disputed the Prime Minister's Russian policy without resigning, a striking development in view of the strong tradition of Cabinet unity on important

issues. The leader also had to consider the views of non-party organizations with heavy Tory representation (such as the Federation of British Industries or the Association of British Chambers of Commerce) on issues affecting their interests.

It is impossible to study with any accuracy the opinions of the hundreds of thousands of Tory party members in the 1920's. Public opinion polls were not introduced until the 1930's, and the Conservative Annual Conferences did not always give a reliable indication of grass-roots sentiments. This paper then deals only with Conservative politicians and the Conservative press. Many attitudes are examined, but it is impossible to determine how much popular support each one had.

The politicians' opinions have been taken primarily from press reports, parliamentary debates, private papers, memoirs, and documents from the Public Record Office and the Tory party archives. The press editorials are taken from a cross section of Tory journals and newspapers. Biographies and monographs have provided background, but the general picture is still incomplete. Many Tories were hesitant in discussing Russia, especially during the World War, but also as long as David Lloyd George remained in power. The records of Cabinet meetings are so sketchy at times as to be almost meaningless. The tradition of a

straight party vote on important parliamentary issues also makes it difficult to pinpoint those who dissented from the main party line on Russia. Tories rarely have engaged in the fratricidal conflicts over foreign policies which have plagued the Labour party. At present, moreover, the private papers of such prominent Conservatives as Winston Churchill, Lord Birkenhead, and Lord Curzon still are unavailable. All but a handful of Tory constituency association newsletters and magazines prior to 1945 have been lost. And for some unknown reason Conservative party officials have withheld the minutes of the 1922 Committee, a serious loss to historians.

A study of opinions is a risky venture which easily can become a string of diffuse comments and quotations. Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to delineate with precision the factors molding opinion. In the case of the Tories and Soviet Russia, this is especially true. Tory opinions were not formed solely on the basis of their understanding of the Bolshevik "experiment." Soviet Russia was a territorial state as well as the center of an international revolutionary movement. Labour's response to the Soviets, the state of British commerce, industrial unrest, and other domestic factors also influenced Tory views. The attitudes of most Conservatives probably were shaped by a combination of these and other factors. Only in a few cases can a dominant issue be identified. Some

Tory backbenchers, for example, entertained moderate opinions of Russia because they hoped that expanded Anglo-Soviet trade would relieve unemployment in their constituencies. The political standing of the Tory party at a given time sometimes obscured genuine opinions. When in power, Tories in the government generally were more reasonable toward Russia than their colleagues on the outside. But when in opposition, leaders and backbenchers more often were united in opposing Soviet Russia.

The paper relies heavily on parliamentary debates and press editorials; and yet both politicians and newspaper editors often say things they do not believe. After all, they usually court the public for selfish purposes. Those holding one view in public could adhere to another in private. But in the case of Russia the public and private opinions of Tory politicians and editors usually seem to have coincided.[4]

Tories rarely produced abstract discourses on Soviet theory or practice. For the most part their opinions of Soviet Russia were stated within the context of Anglo-Soviet commercial and diplomatic relations. In large part, then, this study will examine the effects of

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[4]Moreover, in the 1920's the British press reached a pinnacle of importance and influence; see D. C. Watt, Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century (London, 1965), pp. 10-13. Tory journalists sometimes directly influenced opinions and policies toward Russia.

Tory opinions on the formulation of British policy toward Russia. It is not easy to trace this causal relationship. In some instances Tory opinions seem to have exercised a dominant role in the make-up of British policy; in others they apparently had only a marginal influence. But in general every British government from 1917 to 1927 had to consider Tory opinions when shaping their policies toward Russia.

This is neither a diplomatic history nor a survey of British history. Foreign and domestic events and the views of other political parties toward Russia will be explained only in enough detail to elucidate Tory opinions. For example, a knowledge of Lloyd George's policy toward Russia is necessary to understand Tory reactions during the Coalition period. It is assumed that the reader has a general knowledge of the political and diplomatic history of both Soviet Russia and Great Britain. Finally, the paper will concentrate on Soviet Russia, and not on Communism. The two can be separated.

Tory opinions of Soviet Russia after 1919 can be divided into four categories. On the extreme right a small band of "ultras" interpreted Soviet Russia as the incarnation of metaphysical evil. Those adhering to this nonrational or irrational viewpoint were impervious to changing political developments. For them any association whatsoever with the Soviets was an invitation to national

suicide. A second and much larger number of Tories made up the "rightists." This group believed the Soviets were using real discontents within modern society as an excuse to impose dictatorship. Although their denunciations of Russia sometimes were as intense as those of the "ultras," the "rightists" used comparatively rational arguments. Moreover, their opinions of Russia could and sometimes did change under certain circumstances. The largest number of Tories comprised the "centrist" group. Their opinions of Russia were largely non-polemical. They treated Russia like any other unfriendly government and always maintained a sense of proportion in the face of inflammatory Soviet remarks. They did not fear an Anglo-Soviet detente but remained wary of the Soviets. A small band of "conciliators," the fourth group, worked actively for a rapprochement. They saw the Soviets as a tough bunch of practical politicians with whom Britain could have mutually beneficial relations.

These four groups rarely agreed. Their estimates of the internal conditions in Russia, the Soviet threat to Britain, and the Soviets' ultimate intentions (to name just a few things) varied and sometimes differed significantly. In fact, the Tories held only one common opinion about Russia--they all disliked the Soviets.

The chronological structure of the paper helps in understanding the evolution and changes in Tory attitudes.

The story begins, naturally, in 1917, and 1927 is a logical concluding point. After Anglo-Soviet diplomatic relations were terminated in May, 1927, Tory interest in Russia slackened considerably. Moreover, the world economic depression, the Soviet Five-Year Plans, and National Socialism soon altered the story drastically. The period from 1917 to 1927 is long enough to demonstrate both change and continuity in Tory attitudes. These ten years also saw the Tories in all three political combinations--in opposition, in a coalition, and in power without allies.

In describing change and continuity in general Tory policy, historians often point to the two traditions from which Conservatives' political views are drawn. One source stresses the practical, skillful governing of society; the other expresses an almost mystical veneration of traditional institutions and values.[5] Although some Tories are

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[5]This evaluation of Tory principles is based on Harvey Glickman, "The Toryness of English Conservatism," Journal of British Studies, I (November, 1961), 111-43; Harvey Glickman, "Tory Ethos and Conservative Policy in Britain: the Role of Party Ideas in Party Policy, 1922-1939" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1958); and John Saloma, "British Conservatism and the Welfare State: an Analysis of the Policy-Process Within the British Conservative Party" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1961).

Tory politicians spelled out these beliefs during the 1920's. Some statements were quite progressive, and others were moderate; surprisingly, none were reactionary. A select list of the progressive writings would include Noel Skelton, "Constructive Conservatism," Spectator, CXXX (April 28, 1923), 698-99, (May 5, 1923), 745-46, (May 12, 1923), 789-90, (May 19, 1923), 837-38; and Lord Robert Cecil, "National Unity," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April,

predominantly pragmatists and others are essentially romantics, virtually all share beliefs from both traditions. In the Tory view men are basically irrational and unequal. Strong leadership by the state and a paternalistic structure of authority are both natural and necessary to keep society functioning. The individual is respected, but unbridled individualism is rejected. Historically, Conservatives have distrusted the masses, democracy, and reason. Such established institutions as the Church, Crown, and Empire are venerated because they are traditional. Although gradual change is accepted grudgingly, stability and order are almost sacred.

Scholars sometimes claim that this Tory ethos explains why Conservatives have accepted the modern welfare state.[6] Although the ethos has influenced domestic

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1924,)433-52. Anthony Eden, Oliver Stanley, Harold Macmillan, and Robert Boothby wrote a series of articles on Conservatism in the Saturday Review, CXLI (Feb. 20, 1926), 219-20, (Feb. 27, 1926), 252-53, (March 6, 1926), 289-90, (March 20, 1926), 359. See also Edward Wood, Conservative Beliefs (London: National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, 1924), pamphlet no. 2311. (Tory pamphlets hereinafter referred to as pamphlet.); Duff Cooper, The Conservative Point of View (London, 1925), pamphlet no. 2616; and Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, Tory Democracy (London, 1918). For a sampling of the moderate viewpoint, see Lord Hugh Cecil, Conservative Ideals (London, 1923), pamphlet no. 2108; Walter Elliot, Toryism and the Twentieth Century (London, 1927); and Reginald Banks, The Conservative Outlook (London, 1929). William Wilkinson, Tory Democracy (New York, 1925), and H. Edwards, Young England (London, 1938), have studied the policies of Tory reformists in the interwar period.

[6]E.g., Samuel Beer, British Politics in the Collectivist Age (New York, 1965).

policy, there is considerable dispute over its impact on foreign policy. Some historians believe that ideals determine foreign policy, arguing that the "national interest" includes the dissemination of cherished institutions or ideas abroad.[7] Others see a distinction between foreign policy objectives and domestic ideals.[8]

This controversy is especially relevant in evaluating Tory attitudes toward Soviet Russia. Was the ideological clash between Bolshevism and "Toryism" the key factor in the composition of Tory attitudes toward Russia, or was it of little or no importance?[9] Historians have suggested a number of different answers.

Adhering closely to the Marxist-Leninist analysis of history, Soviet scholars maintain that the Tories' attitudes were determined solely by their dominant class

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[7]E.g., Max Beloff, Imperial Sunset, Vol. I: Britain's Liberal Empire, 1897-1921 (London, 1969), p. 13.

[8]E.g., William Strang, Britain in World Affairs (London, 1961), pp. 13-20. Joseph Frankel presents an interesting and readable study of foreign policy formulation in The Making of Foreign Policy: an Analysis of Decision-Making (New York, 1963).

[9]The diametrically opposed tenets of Bolshevism and the Tory creed need not be explained here. A knowledge of the social background of Tory politicians helps in understanding the contrast to Bolshevism. For a brilliant analysis of their class structure in the twentieth century, see W. L. Guttsman, The British Political Elite (New York, 1963).

interests expressed in an anti-Bolshevik ideology.[10] These historians claim the Tories used every conceivable weapon to destroy the Soviet Union in its infancy. After British military intervention in Russia had failed, English workers forced Britain to negotiate with Russia. However, reactionary Tories launched a powerful anti-Soviet crusade to fight closer Anglo-Soviet ties; in late 1924 this campaign returned them to power. The Tories then worked feverishly to create an anti-Soviet European bloc, but these plans to force the restoration of capitalism in Russia were nullified by emerging inter-imperialist antagonisms and by the heroic defense of the Soviet people.

In a milder version of this Soviet thesis, Dorothy George charges that Tories were unable to confront diplomatic realities because of their overriding fear of Communism:

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[10]The following summary is based on excerpts from Svetlana Nikonova, Anti-Sovetskii Politika Vneshnaia Angliskikh Konservatorov, 1924-1927 gg. ("The Anti-Soviet Foreign Policy of the English Conservatives, 1924-1927") (Moscow, 1963); F. D. Volkov, Krakh Angliiskoi politiki interventsii i diplomaticheskoi izolatsii sovetskovo gosudarstva, 1917-1924 gg. ("The Failure of the English Policy of Intervention and Diplomatic Isolation of the Soviet Government, 1917-1924") (Moscow, 1954); F. D. Volkov, Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniia, 1924-1929 gg. ("Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1924-1929") (Moscow, 1968); and V. G. Trukhanovskii, Vneshniaia Politika Anglii na Pervom Etape Obschego Krizisa Kapitalizma, 1918-1939 gg. ("English Foreign Policy during the First Stage of the General Crisis of Capitalism, 1918-1939") (Moscow, 1962). Translations of excerpts kindly provided by Dr. William L. Mathes of Seton Hall University.

> The Conservative Red-obsession was translated in the interwar period into obstinate governmental rejection of Soviet attempts to settle primary issues between the two nations and a steady Communist-baiting in domestic affairs. . . . But that the deeper element of Tory anti-Communism was an almost obsessive fear of its ultimate effects was well illustrated in the reactions to social problems in the post-Bolshevik world, the revolutionary jitters of the ruling classes in such crises, say, as the General Strike of 1926.[11]

Donald Lammers places minimal emphasis on this anti-Red hypothesis in his study of British foreign policy.[12] Although conceding that Tories were hostile toward the Soviets, Lammers asserts that there was no connection "between these relatively unspecified attitudes . . . and those concrete historical situations in which it was either possible or mandatory for Britain to act with respect to the Soviet Union."[13] For him the anti-Red thesis oversimplifies the complexities inherent in policy formulation. After examining the Munich crisis he concludes that the Tories' differing policy suggestions "attenuates the connection between class origins and ideology almost to the vanishing point."[14] In sum, the Tories were not

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[11]The Warped Vision: British Foreign Policy, 1933-1939 (Pittsburgh, 1965), pp. 21-23. For her general analysis, see pp. 3-35.

[12]Explaining Munich: the Search for Motive in British Policy (Stanford, 1966). See also George's rejoinder in her review of his book in American Historical Review, LXXII (July, 1967), 1399.

[13]Lammers, Explaining Munich, p. 3.

[14]Ibid., p. 13.

blinded by the specter of Communism.

Each of these three interpretations is marred by methodological errors. Soviet historians limit their sources primarily to Soviet documents and publications by British Communists and left-wing Labourites. Because the Soviets use a priori reasoning, they make numerous absurd allegations and even distort Tory attitudes deliberately. In short, their works are almost totally unreliable. George constructs her theory with little analysis of events. Lammers criticizes George for this, but his study is limited to Munich; and his sampling technique is too narrowly based. The thesis of this paper rests somewhere between the polarized views of George and Lammers.

As mentioned above, Tory views toward Russia are not reducible to a simple formula. A brief overview of the contents of the paper will demonstrate this more clearly. The story divides conveniently into three parts: background, 1917 to 1919; negotiations, 1920 to 1924; breakdown, 1925 to 1927. During the first two years of Bolshevik rule, Tory opinions evolved slowly into stringent opposition to the Soviets. At this time the Bolsheviks were seen primarily as international revolutionaries rather than as rulers of a sovereign state. Despite the Tories' paramount interest in the Allied war effort, most of them within and even outside of the Coalition government were only mildly critical of the Bolsheviks until the fall of

1918. But the nearly simultaneous occurrence of the Armistice, the emergence of the White opposition in Russia, and especially the sacking of the British embassy in Petrograd converted most Tories to rabid anti-Bolshevism. Besides popularizing the White cause in 1919, a number of Tory politicians worked hard to prevent Prime Minister David Lloyd George from negotiating with the Soviets. But when the failure of the Whites became apparent in the fall of 1919, the Tories' nearly unanimous attitude toward the Soviets began to crack as some advocated a new approach to Russia.

From 1920 to 1924 Tory opinions centered primarily on the attempts of successive British governments to negotiate a settlement with Russia. Also during these years the four different groupings of Tory opinion were solidified. Largely through Lloyd George's efforts Britain signed a Trade Agreement with Russia in March, 1921. But the Tory right used bombastic Soviet statements and the Russo-Polish war to harass the Prime Minister and prolong the negotiations. In the winter of 1921-22 Conservatives prevented greater British assistance for the victims of the Russian famine. The following spring Tory pressure forced Lloyd George to adopt a strong position during negotiations at Genoa and The Hague, which had been intended to normalize relations with Russia. As usual, intemperate Soviet remarks reinforced the arguments of Tory opponents.

In 1921, and especially in 1922, the opposition to Lloyd George's Russian policy was prompted increasingly by the desire of many Tories to topple the Coalition. Tories in the government were forced to balance their conflicting loyalties to the Prime Minister and to their party. The Tories assumed power alone in late 1922, and in the following year Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon issued an ultimatum demanding that the Soviets cease foreign propaganda or lose the Trade Agreement. Most Tories supported him. The Soviets backed down unexpectedly, but the confrontation merely reinforced their estrangement from Conservatives. The Labour government of 1924 extended de jure recognition to Russia and negotiated two Treaties supposedly normalizing relations. For two reasons virtually all Tories strongly denounced Labour and the Soviets: the Treaties really settled nothing between the two countries, and the Tories hoped to dislodge the Labour government. Labour did resign, and during the election campaign of 1924 the Tories' frenzied anti-Bolshevik rhetoric created a Red scare. The publication of the famous Zinoviev letter shortly before the election probably helped to insure a lopsided Tory victory.

From 1925 to 1927, the last part of the story, the Tory government attempted to maintain the Trade Agreement and the diplomatic link despite the serious damage inflicted in 1924. For the first year and a half Foreign

Secretary Austen Chamberlain attempted to disarm his Tory critics by keeping the Soviets at arm's length. The Soviets' minimal involvement in international intrigue at this time greatly assisted him. But Chamberlain's plan to achieve a settlement with the Soviets by ignoring their occasional anti-British outbursts suffered a serious blow when they tried to intervene in the British general strike and were implicated in the Chinese revolution. These two developments, following in the wake of the 1924 election and the Zinoviev letter, convinced most Tories that the Soviets really were intent on destroying Britain. In response, many Tory politicians supported a movement within the party to force their government to break all ties with Russia. In part to quiet their Tory critics, the government issued a stern warning to Russia in February, 1927. But the uncompromising tone of the note left no doubt that another Soviet provocation could not be tolerated. In May, 1927, Soviet trade and diplomatic officials in Britain were charged with espionage. This incident proved too damaging for the government to repair. Chamberlain finally succumbed to Tory pressure by breaking relations with Russia.

Even this synopsis oversimplifies the difficulties of the subject. Hopefully, the paper's schematic framework will make the story comprehensible without obscuring the complexity.[15]

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[15]A guide to the major Conservatives in the text is provided in Appendix III.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

Conservatives and Tsarist Russia

Russia began to threaten Great Britain's European interests during the first half of the nineteenth century.[1] In the latter third of the century the area of conflict spilled over into Asia, where the two Powers competed for political and commercial domination in Persia, Afghanistan, and China. Most leading members of Tory governments at that time rarely spoke in public about Russia, apparently fearful of worsening already strained relations. When they did speak, their remarks were temperate and, at times, even conciliatory.[2] Tory condemnations of Russia came largely from the press and from two wings within the party. Tory radicals like Lord Randolph Churchill and Joseph Chamberlain

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[1]Accounts of Anglo-Russian relations up to World War I can be found in M. S. Anderson, Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553-1815 (New York, 1958); J. H. Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain (Cambridge, Mass., 1950); K. W. B. Middleton, Britain and Russia (London, 1947); J. A. R. Marriott, Anglo-Russian Relations, 1689-1943 (London, 1943); and Firuz Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914 (New Haven, 1968).

[2]See extracts from their speeches in a memorandum by Wallis Myers (Director of Publications, National War Aims Committee), n.d. [1921?], London, Beaverbrook Library, David Lloyd George Papers, F/204/3/7. This interesting document contains an excellent analysis of prewar Conservative opinions of Russia. (Hereinafter referred to as Myers memorandum.)

occasionally denounced the Russian autocracy's domestic policies.[3] Conservative Imperialists feared Russia would attack India, the essential link in the imperial chain. Young George Curzon and others often wrote of the alleged threat.[4]

At the turn of the century Lord Salisbury's government began looking toward Russia to counter the growing German threat, but radicals and Imperialists remained unreconciled. Occasional questions from Tory backbenchers concerning religious persecution in Russia were answered by government spokesmen claiming that Britain could not interfere with another country's domestic policies.[5] Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, warned of increased Russian activity in Persia, but the Cabinet neglected his notes.[6]

Two incidents in particular mirrored the divergent views of the Tory government and some of their supporters. In October, 1904 Russian warships mistakenly attacked a fleet of English trawlers in the North Sea. Large segments of the Tory party and press demanded war if Russia did not offer reparations, but the conciliatory attitudes of both

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[3] Ibid.

[4] E.g., George Curzon, Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question (London, 1889).

[5] William P.Coates and Zelda Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations (London, 1945), p. 339.

[6] Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, pp. 140-50.

governments averted hostilities.[7] Barely three months later many Britons hailed the outbreak of revolution in Russia, but government leaders remained silent.[8]

The Anglo-Russian Convention signed by the Liberal government in April, 1907 settled outstanding differences in Tibet, Afghanistan, and Persia. The Tory hierarchy, worried about Germany, supported the pragmatic accord.[9] However, radical Tories claimed the agreement violated moral principles, and Imperialists like Curzon denounced it for harming British interests in Central Asia.[10]

Bonar Law, who became party leader in 1911, continued to plead for a lasting accord with Russia.[11] Most of his followers, however, feared a Russia fully recovered from the losses inflicted by Japan. Alleged Russian infractions of the Convention continued to enrage the Imperialists.[12]

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[7]Roger Schinness, "The North Sea Incident of 1904" (unpublished M.A. thesis, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1966).

[8]Myers memorandum.

[9]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates, 4th ser., CXC (June 4, 1908), cols. 246-52.

[10]For Curzon's assessment, see Ibid., CLXXXIII (Feb. 6, 1908), cols. 999-1024.

[11]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), 5th ser., XL (July 10, 1912), cols. 2035-36. (Hereinafter referred to as Debates.) See also Count Benckendorff (Russian ambassador to Great Britain) to Lord Lansdowne (former Tory Foreign Secretary), July 11, 1912, London, Beaverbrook Library, Bonar Law Papers, 26/5/24.

[12]Imperialist sentiments were expressed in Debates,

But the views of the party leadership prevailed as Britain entered the World War.

During the 1920's Labourites frequently accused Tories of having sympathized with political and religious repression in Tsarist Russia.[13] Admittedly, some Conservatives had defended the Russian autocracy as necessary for such a vast land populated by diverse nationalities and an illiterate peasantry.[14] However, the allegation remains unproven because Labourites overlooked the minority viewpoint in the Tory party. Moreover, in the era of "old diplomacy" government leaders from either major party rarely criticized the internal policies of other countries. Even such Liberals as Lord Palmerston and William Gladstone had made friendly gestures to Russia.[15] Silence, however, did not mean sympathy. Once Britain signed the Convention, Conservative leaders allowed expediency to prevail--yet fear remained.

XL (July 10, 1912), cols. 1934-44, 1977-80. "Saturday" Handbook for Unionist Candidates (London, 1909), pp. 227-28, contains a typical estimate of Russian intentions.

[13]Backbencher Tom Shaw's indictment in Debates, CLXIX (Jan. 16, 1924), col. 159, is typical.

[14]For a rejoinder, see the remarks of backbencher J. D. Rees in Ibid., XL (July 10, 1912), cols. 2015-20.

[15]R. Page Arnot, The Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain (London, 1967), p. 47.

The March Revolution

When the World War began, Conservatives laid aside their old animosities. Initially, Russia contributed greatly to the Allied war effort, but by early 1917 a combination of factors weakened military and civilian morale. On March 12 the Tsarist government collapsed. The Conservative press reacted to the March Revolution with surprise and expectation. Many believed that Russians had revolted to throw off pro-German conspirators in the government.[16] J. L. Garvin, editor of the weekly Observer and the ablest Tory journalist, claimed that the Revolution united the Allies in the cause of liberty and freedom. The Spectator agreed.[17]

Speaking for the Coalition government in the House of Commons on March 15, Bonar Law congratulated the Russian people

> upon the establishment among them of free institutions in full confidence that they will lead not only to the rapid and happy progress of the Russian nation but to the prosecution with renewed steadfastness and vigour of the war against the stronghold of an autocratic militarism which threatens the liberty of Europe.

In his closing remarks Law sympathized with the Tsar, "our

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[16]The Times (London), March 16, 1917, p. 7; Morning Post, March 16, 1917, p. 4; Daily Telegraph, March 16, 1917, p. 4; Daily Mail, March 16, 1917, p. 4.

[17]Observer, March 18, 1917, pp. 9-10; Spectator, CXVIII (March 24, 1917), 357.

loyal Ally . . . who had laid upon him by his birth a burden which had proved too heavy for him."[18] Tories habitually portrayed Nicholas as a humble, but inept, patriot who had succumbed to dangerous advice from incompetent advisors.[19]

The Tory press' initially optimistic reception of the Revolution soon was tempered. British correspondents in Russia transmitted reports of the difficulties confronting the new Provisional government, emphasizing especially the pacifist propaganda of the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates.[20] While the Liberal and the Labour press were still congratulating the Russian people, Conservative papers focused on Russia's internal problems. The Times stated that extremist elements must be dealt with quickly. Even the Morning Post acknowledged a widespread demand for political and social freedom, but it pleaded with revolutionary leaders to remember that Germany's defeat was their primary goal. It also urged them to be cautious because "the age of

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[18] Debates, XCI (March 15, 1917), cols. 1421-22.

[19] E.g., Ibid., XCI (March 19, 1917), col. 1538.

[20] During the life span of the Provisional government, Allied correspondents were accorded great freedom of inquiry, interviewing top government and military leaders and traveling widely. But many reporters for Conservative newspapers remained sympathetic to the Tsarist government, and their dispatches reflected this bias. For the activities of The Times' correspondent, Robert Wilton, see The History of The Times (London, 1952), IV, Part I, 245-49.

freedom does not arrive in a night." Just a fortnight after the Revolution, the Saturday Review exhorted the Russians to submit to an autocrat for the duration of the war. However, the Spectator feared Britons would make a "great mistake" if they became "unduly alarmed" by the activities of the Petrograd Soviet.[21]

Liberals, and especially Labourites, organized mass meetings to welcome the Revolution, but Tories were conspicuously absent from the podiums. The Minister of National Service, Neville Chamberlain, perhaps stated the feelings of many Tories when he wrote, "This Russian Revolution which by a grim sort of irony is received with shouts of approval by our people as though it were going to win the war for us, is fermenting in all the unsteady brains of the world."[22]

The Provisional government struggled to maintain Tsarist treaty commitments, but the Socialist-dominated Petrograd Soviet compounded their difficulties. Although unopposed to a defensive war, the Soviet insisted on a redefinition of war aims. The dissemination of such

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[21]The Times, March 19, 1917, p. 9; Morning Post, March 20, 1917, p. 6; Saturday Review, CXXIII (March 24, 1917), 266; Spectator, CXVIII (March 24, 1917), 381. The Observer, March 18, 1917, p. 8, agreed with the Spectator.

[22]Keith Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London, 1946), pp. 79-80. For reports of three of these meetings, see The Times, March 31, 1917, p. 10. In British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 17-20, Graubard details Labour's reaction to the March Revolution.

propaganda within the Russian army undermined the already threatened Eastern front. A leading pro-Allied member of the government was forced to resign in early May. The reorganized ministry, dominated by socialist Alexander Kerensky, notified the Allies that Russia would seek neither annexations nor indemnities after the war.[23]

By this time Tories realized the Revolution had erupted in opposition to the war and not in support of it. Although publicly applauding Kerensky's policies, several Conservative members of the Coalition privately expressed concern for Russia's plight.[24] The Tory press also betrayed increasing annoyance and alarm. The Times hopefully explained that the "peace without annexation and indemnity" formula really was no different from Allied war aims. The Observer, however, charged that such phraseology could benefit the Central Powers. J. L. Garvin also attacked the Petrograd Soviet for its anti-British propaganda campaign. The National Review bluntly asked the Russians if they realized that freedom depended upon

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[23]William Henry Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921 (New York, 1935), I, 100-21, 142-65.

[24]Cf. Bonar Law's statement in Debates, XCII (April 26, 1917), col. 2554, with a memorandum by Curzon, May 12, 1917, Birmingham, Birmingham University Library, Sir Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 20/78. For another pessimistic estimate, see Lord Milner (Minister without Portfolio) to Sir George Buchanan (ambassador to Russia), May 15, 1917, cited by Evelyn Wrench, Alfred Lord Milner: the Man of No Illusions, 1854-1925 (London, 1958), p. 328. Formerly a Liberal, Milner was, in effect, a Unionist by this time.

Germany's defeat. The Saturday Review typified Tory press opinion when it exclaimed its inability to understand the malaise in Russia. However, the Spectator continued to hope that Russia would solve her difficulties without jeopardizing the war effort.[25]

Conservative backbenchers spoke out during a parliamentary debate on war aims held on May 16. Left-wing Opposition M.P.'s introduced a motion urging Britain to join the Provisional government in renouncing annexations and indemnities. Several pacifist members of the Independent Labour party praised Russia's action, but Unionist Halford Mackinder labelled such idealistic verbiage as momentarily irrelevant, and criticized the Petrograd exponents of "anarchy and disorder." In concluding he denounced the folly of allowing democratic procedures during a war against autocracy. Arch-Tory General Henry Page Croft stated that the March Revolution had been directed against Prussianism and not against the war, as had been contended by several Labour speakers. Page Croft insisted that all Russian political parties, extremists included, were expansionist-minded; he begged the government to disregard their rhetoric. After proclaiming "a vote of censure" against the Revolution,

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[25]The Times, May 22, 1917, p. 7; Observer, May 6, p. 7, May 13, 1917, p. 7; National Review, LXIX (May, 1917), 291; Saturday Review, CXXIII (May 19, 1917), 446; Spectator, CXVIII (May 12, 1917), 529, 553.

Aubrey Herbert explained that all nations used such language to impress world opinion. The Opposition motion was defeated easily.[26]

On May 9 the Petrograd Soviet requested that socialists from belligerent countries meet to discuss ways of ending the war.[27] British socialists responded enthusiastically, but many Conservatives denounced the Soviets as traitors. The Observer alone supported the proclamation, Garvin feeling that the British government would alienate sincere Russian socialists if they reacted with hostility.[28] Although the government granted permission for three ILP members to attend a pre-conference meeting in Petrograd, the Seamen's Union refused to take them. In Commons on June 11 a group of Tory backbenchers attempted to have the passports rescinded. They criticized the Russian government for supporting the conference and portrayed the country as foundering in chaos. In reply Bonar Law sympathized with Russia's plight but refused to withdraw the passports.[29]

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[26] Debates, XCIII (May 16, 1917), cols. 1650-57, 1716-19, 1690.

[27] The Times, May 12, 1917, p. 6. Merle Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), pp. 163-90, examines the abortive Stockholm Conference.

[28] Observer, June 2, 1917, p. 6.

[29] Debates, XCIV (June 11, 1917), cols. 697-730.

In the summer the Provisional government's power eroded rapidly when the disastrous Brusilov offensive increased Bolshevik influence in the Petrograd Soviet. The Conservative press now blamed the Bolsheviks for Russia's troubles. Most Conservatives alleged that the Bolshevik minority (also termed "anarchist" or "Maximalist") had conspired with their German paymasters to drive the country out of the war. According to The Times, "The Germans have never found so good an investment for their forged notes as in financing this deadly parasite of the democratic Revolution."[30] Many Tory papers pictured Kerensky and his followers as visionaries unequipped to deal with the extremist threat; they urged Britain to stop supporting him.[31] Several journals now regretted the Tsar's downfall. In reversing its previous stand, the Saturday Review felt, "We should today be in sight of peace had it not been for the March Revolution."[32] Even the formerly optimistic Spectator concluded that Britain

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[30]The Times, July 24, 1917, p. 7. On July 20, p. 6, The Times offered "definite" proof that Lenin was in Germany's pay. For similar statements, see Daily Telegraph, Aug. 2, 1917, p. 4; Spectator, CXIX (Aug. 4, 1917), 110-11; and a speech by Rowland Hunt in Debates, XCVI (July 31, 1917), col. 1903.

[31]E.g., Daily Mail, July 2, 1917, p. 4; Saturday Review, CXXIV (Aug. 4, 1917), 81; and National Review, LXIX (July, 1917), 523.

[32]Saturday Review, CXXIV (Aug. 4, 1917), 58. See also National Review, LXIX (July, 1917), 523-24.

must proceed with the war as if Russia did not exist. Only the English Review and the Observer held out glimmers of hope.[33]

In September the Commander in Chief of the Russian Army, General Lavr Kornilov, marched on Petrograd to overthrow the tottering government. An avowed rightist, Kornilov was supported by several British military and diplomatic officials in Petrograd. Officially the government refused to take sides, but Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Lord Milner, among others, privately sympathized with the Russian general.[34] A few Conservative papers applauded the rebels: although acknowledging Kerensky's patriotism, The Times and the Saturday Review felt only Kornilov was strong enough to counter the anarchical Petrograd Soviet.[35] But most journals remained noncommittal, judging that the tragic confrontation would lead to civil war and finally eliminate Russia from the war.[36]

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[33]Spectator, CXIX (July 28, 1917), 76; English Review, XXV (July, 1917), 72; Observer, Sept. 2, 1917, p. 6.

[34]Richard H. Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921, Vol. I: Intervention and the War (Princeton, 1961), pp. 11-13; Alfred M. Gollin, Proconsul in Politics: a Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power (New York, 1964), p. 551.

[35]The Times, Sept. 11, 1917, p. 7; Saturday Review, CXXIV (Sept. 15, 1917), 197.

[36]Daily Mail, Sept. 12, 1917, p. 2; Daily Telegraph, Sept. 12, 1917, p. 4; Spectator, CXIX (Sept. 15, 1917), 260.

Kerensky's triumph helped the Bolsheviks, for governmental authority virtually disappeared. On the Eastern front German troops advanced almost unopposed. During the fall, Tory newspapers drastically reduced coverage of Russian events. The few editorials depicted Russia as a mortally-stricken giant.[37] The Observer prophesied a successful Bolshevik revolution.[38]

One can only outline the Tories' views between the March and the November Revolutions. Rigid wartime censorship and the numerous rumors from Russia prevented Conservatives, or indeed anyone, from obtaining the information necessary to form accurate judgments. Moreover, the government forbade extended debate on Russia. The source material, although fragmentary, is suggestive. Tories evaluated Russian developments almost exclusively within the context of the war. Backbencher Halford Mackinder probably stated their viewpoint most clearly: "At this moment it remains to be seen what will be the final view of the Russian democracy, not on general ideals,

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On September 13, p. 7, The Times assumed a neutral position. This should serve as a useful corrective to the widespread belief that Conservative newspapers almost unanimously supported Kornilov. For an example of this misconception, see Robert D. Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution (Durham, N.C., 1954), p. 124.

[37] Morning Post, Oct. 6, 1917, p. 4; The Times, Oct. 18, 1917, p. 6.

[38] Observer, Sept. 30, 1917, p. 6.

but on the question--the practical question--of the immediate conduct of the war."[39] Labour leaders often charged that Conservatives were unsympathetic to the March Revolution.[40] With some justification, Tories denied the allegation.[41] As the Russian war effort faltered, however, they deplored the events which denied Britain the assistance of her eastern ally. They did not understand how Russians could want peace when the "hated Hun" remained unconquered. To the Tories, all Russian extremists were simply German agents.

The Tories' aversion to British socialism also helped to prejudice them against Russia. Socialists dominated the Provisional government after May, 1917, but Tory papers failed to understand the Russian socialist movement. Such phrases as "open diplomacy" and "no annexations" were equated with the traitorous proposals of socialist pacifists like Philip Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald. On separate occasions the English Review and the Spectator examined the tenets of international socialism and the ideology of the Petrograd Soviet, including extracts from the writings of Karl Marx. The English Review article, written by editor Austin Harrison,

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[39] Debates, XCIII (May 16, 1917), col. 1651.

[40] Ibid., col. 1656, and XCVIII (Nov. 6, 1917), col. 2035.

[41] Ibid., XCVI (July 26, 1917), col. 1520.

concluded that Britain would lose Russia's friendship if Tories continued to depict Russian socialists as visionary dreamers, German agents, or anarchists.[42] But such articles were too few and too late to convince the Tories, whose worst fears about Russia materialized in November.

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[42]English Review, XXV (July, 1917), 69-73; Spectator, CXIX (Sept. 1, 1917), 206-7.

CHAPTER II

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

The Bolsheviks Leave the War

Tory papers offered only brief commentaries on the November 7 Revolution. The Times called it "hardly surprising," adding that "real Russia" would never conclude a separate peace. The Daily Mail felt it made "very little difference" to the Allied cause. The Spectator echoed other journals when it predicted that the "Anarchist Government" would not survive.[1]

The Bolsheviks quickly adopted a series of domestic measures at variance with accepted Western governmental practice. On December 15 at Brest-Litovsk Russia signed an armistice with the Central Powers. Bolshevik foreign policy seemed designed to provoke the Allies. They published the "secret treaties" between the Tsar and the West, treated foreign diplomats with disdain, and appealed to the colonial peoples to revolt.[2] Conservative journals generally did not comment as the Bolsheviks embarked on their crusade. The Times, for example, printed

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[1]The Times, Nov. 9, 1917, p. 7; Daily Mail, Nov. 10, 1917, p. 2; Spectator, CXIX (Nov. 10, 1917), 511. See also Daily Telegraph, Nov. 9, 1917, p. 6, and Morning Post, Nov. 9, 1917, p. 6.

[2]Isaac Deutscher examines Soviet policies at this time in The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879-1921 (New York, 1954), pp. 325-60.

only two editorials on Russia until the first week of December; and these were concerned with Soviet foreign policy. The whole range of domestic legislation was largely ignored. Such an omission may have been prompted by British censorship of reports from Petrograd; and the Bolsheviks began to harass foreign correspondents.[3]

The Bolsheviks were depicted by the Tory press as a band of fanatic anarchists acting under German instructions; only the Daily Telegraph dissented. The Morning Post, The Times, and the Daily Mail claimed the ringleaders were of mixed Russian and German Jewish extraction, the latter paper stating that Lenin was really"Zederblum."[4] No Bolshevik action surprised these newspapers. As The Times once explained, "We already know what to expect until the saner elements among the Russians reassert themselves."[5] The press, however, was not uniformly hostile. The Daily Telegraph, and especially the Spectator, avoided polemics. The latter journal believed the "secret treaties" showed "Tsarist treachery to have been worse than the open mischiefmaking of Lenin and his crew."[6] Although the press saw

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[3]The History of The Times, IV, Part I, 256-60.

[4]Morning Post, Dec. 22, 1917, p. 4; The Times, Nov. 23, 1917, p. 7; Daily Mail, Nov. 9, 1917, p. 6. See also National Review, LXX (December, 1917), 414.

[5]The Times, Dec. 5, 1917, p. 9.

[6]Spectator, CXIX (Dec. 1, 1917), 635.

the Bolsheviks as a transitory irritant, a few journals suggested a need for Allied intervention.[7] The Saturday Review and the Morning Post implored Russian "patriots" to revolt and restore Tsardom; they argued that only a monarchy could rule such a vast land unschooled in democratic principles.[8]

Despite the Bolshevik threat to the war effort, Conservative members of the Coalition government were not overtly hostile toward them. On December 3, after several weeks of discussion, the War Cabinet agreed to guarantee financial support for A. M. Kaledin, a pro-Allied Cossack general, and other Russians willing to fight against Germany. When instructed to send agents to these anti-Bolshevik groups, ambassador George Buchanan in Petrograd replied that attempts to continue the struggle in war-weary Russia would "embitter her people against us."[9] Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, also objecting to the policy formulated during his absence in Paris, cautioned

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[7]The Times, Dec. 5, 1917, p. 7; Morning Post, Nov. 19, 1917, p. 6.

[8]Saturday Review, CXXIV (Dec. 1, 1917), 431; Morning Post, Dec. 22, 1917, p. 4.

[9]Lord Robert Cecil (Tory Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) to Buchanan, Dec. 3, 1917, cited by Louis Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War: Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1941 (New York, 1969), p. 16; Buchanan to Balfour, Nov. 27, 1917, cited by Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and other Diplomatic Memories (London, 1923), II, 225.

against treating the Bolsheviks as avowed enemies:

> I entirely dissent from this view and believe it to be founded on a misconception. If, for the moment, the Bolsheviks show peculiar virulence in dealing with the British Empire, it is probably because they think that the British Empire is the great obstacle to immediate peace; but they are fanatics to whom the constitution of every State, whether monarchical or republican, is equally odious. Their appeal is to every revolutionary force, economic, social, racial, or religious, which can be used to upset the existing political organisations of mankind. . . . They are dangerous dreamers, whose power, be it great or small, transitory or permanent, depends partly on German gold, partly on the determination of the Russian army to fight no more; but who would genuinely like to put into practice the wild theories which have so long been germinating in the shadow of the Russian autocracy. Now, contrary to the opinion of some of my colleagues, I am clearly of opinion that it is to our advantage to avoid, as long as possible, an open breach with this crazy system. If this be drifting, then I am a drifter by deliberate policy.

In essence, any provocation would give the Bolsheviks a reason for welcoming the Germans as "friends and deliverers."[10]

Balfour's reasoning proved convincing. On December 10 the Cabinet approved the release of several incarcerated Bolshevik agents and discussed informal contacts with the Soviet regime. Several ministers were dubious, "Was it desirable to treat with both Trotski and Kaledin at one and the same time?"[11] As the unofficial emissary to the

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[10]Memorandum by Balfour, Dec. 9, 1917, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Cabinet Memoranda, CAB 24/35. (Cabinet Memoranda hereinafter cited as CAB 24/ .)

[11]War Cabinet minutes, Dec. 10, 1917, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Cabinet Minutes, CAB 23/4. (Cabinet Minutes hereinafter cited as CAB 23/ .)

Bolsheviks, the Cabinet later chose R. Bruce Lockhart, a consul recently returned from Moscow. Convinced that Lenin and Trotsky were German agents, only Lord Robert Cecil apparently objected.[12] On December 23 Britain and France divided Russia into spheres of influence to facilitate assistance to the anti-Bolsheviks.[13]

Britain maintained this dual policy toward Russia almost until the end of the war. A memorandum prepared by Milner and Cecil summarized the government's position. The link with the Soviets was to be used primarily to counter German influence and to assure the Bolsheviks that aid for Kaledin and others was a military necessity. It was merely an accident that anti-German forces also were anti-Bolshevik.[14] This policy was hazardous, but as a converted Cecil noted, "I think we must be prepared to take risks."[15]

Early in 1918 the Bolshevik government issued three decrees which discredited them more widely in Britain: the Constituent Assembly was dispersed, the Orthodox Church disestablished, and all foreign loans repudiated. Some

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[12]R. Bruce Lockhart, British Agent (New York, 1933), pp. 197-98.

[13]John Bradley, Allied Intervention in Russia (New York, 1968), p. 13.

[14]Memorandum by Milner and Cecil, Dec. 23, 1917, Appendix to War Cabinet Minutes, Dec. 26, 1917, CAB 23/4.

[15]Minute by Cecil, Jan. 5, 1918, cited by Ullman, Intervention and the War, p. 57.

Conservative papers were especially outraged by the dismissal of the Assembly.[16] Buchanan later recalled that this action turned him against the Bolsheviks.[17] The full impact of debt repudiation was not felt until after the war, but the Saturday Review remarked that it exposed the Soviets as destroyers of world law and order.[18]

In Britain at this time a great deal of attention was centered on the Brest-Litovsk deliberations. Leon Trotsky kept Germany at arm's length for almost two months with a mixture of threats and concessions.[19] As this deadlock continued, the British government undertook a fuller discussion of their Russian policy, particularly since Lockhart had departed without specific instructions. Maxim Litvinov had been appointed as the Bolsheviks' provisional plenipotentiary to Britain, and a few Britons advocated a reciprocal gesture.[20] Balfour reasoned that an official link would strengthen the Soviets, a move he now regarded as necessary since Trotsky's tactics at Brest-Litovsk reinforced his conviction that they were not

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[16]E.g., Spectator, CXX (Jan. 26, 1918), 74.

[17]Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, II, 256.

[18]Saturday Review, CXXV (Feb. 16, 1918), 130.

[19]John Wheeler-Bennett, The Forgotten Peace: Brest-Litovsk, March, 1918 (London, 1939), is a standard account.

[20]William P. Coates, Armed Intervention in Russia, 1918-1922 (London, 1935), p. 43.

German dupes.[21] At a War Cabinet meeting on February 7, the Foreign Secretary suggested giving Lockhart political credentials. Two fellow Tories objected. Lord Robert Cecil dissented because of the Bolsheviks' anti-British propaganda. Lord Curzon reasoned that extending recognition while they were negotiating with the enemy would have a "very unfortunate effect in this country." The Prime Minister decided the matter; Lockhart was granted political credentials to underscore the importance of his mission.[22]

In Petrograd Trotsky convinced Lockhart that he would cooperate with the Allies if they abandoned the counterrevolutionaries and extended trade facilities.[23] Balfour's equivocal response to Lockhart's plea for acceptance underscored Britain's difficulty. Although not disavowing collaboration, he noted that the same rationale had led to assistance for the anti-Bolsheviks. Britain would not cease supporting these groups since

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[21]War Cabinet minutes, Jan. 17, Jan. 22, 1918, CAB 23/5. The Daily Telegraph, Jan. 5, 1918, p. 6, like most Tory papers, strongly objected to official ties.

[22]War Cabinet minutes, Feb. 7, 1918, CAB 23/5; David Lloyd George, The War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, Vol. VI: 1918 (Boston, 1937), pp. 124-28. The War Cabinet discussion was continued the following day; see Keith Middlemas, ed., Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary, Vol. I: 1916-1925 (London, 1969), pp. 48-52.

[23]Lockhart, British Agent, pp. 224-26.

Bolshevik rule would not last. Moreover, the Soviets first would have to cease propagandizing in Allied nations.[24] Britain's dilemma was resolved in the spring when the Bolsheviks accepted harsher peace terms following a renewed German offensive.

The Bolsheviks' conduct at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations impressed some Tory papers. Previously, only the Daily Telegraph had refused to label them as German agents. By January, however, others began to concur. The Spectator suggested they were "idealists genuinely inspired by their mania." The English Review stated:

> The Bolsheviks have undoubtedly scored a moral victory at Brest-Litovsk through the sheer sincerity of both their aims and of their exposition. For the first time the old secrecy and selfishness of diplomacy have been exposed and flounted before the world, and in the process the significance of Trotsky has become a world symbol.[25]

Despite Brest-Litovsk, some papers continued to print "documentary" stories of Bolshevik connections with the Kaiser.[26] The Daily Mail ignored the paradox, while The Times stated that the Bolsheviks included both idealists and traitors.[27] However, all Conservative

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[24]Ullman, Intervention and the War, pp. 74-75.

[25]Spectator, CXX (Jan. 19, 1918), 55-56; English Review, XXVI (February, 1918), 179.

[26]For a typical exposé, see The Times, Feb. 9, 1918, p. 6.

[27]Daily Mail, Feb. 26, 1918, p. 2; The Times, Feb. 26, 1918, p. 7.

journals denounced their acceptance of the peace terms. The Spectator and the Saturday Review characterized them as cowards. The Times and the Daily Telegraph felt the terms were a fitting reward for their destruction of Russia's military might.[28]

Although the British government refused to allow a lengthy debate on Russia, Tory backbenchers expressed their attitudes on tangential issues. Much of their attention centered on Maxim Litvinov, who repeatedly urged British workers to spearhead a peace movement. Conservative demands for his expulsion revealed a deep-seated fear of Bolshevik ideas on the home front. One Tory described him typically as a "rolling stone--a dangerous character."[29] The government refused to expel him for fear of reprisals against Britons still in Russia.[30] However, Tory Home Secretary Sir George Cave publicly protested.[31] Conservatives applauded the government's expulsion of Bolshevik agent Leo Kamenev when he stopped in England en route

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[28] Spectator, CXX (March 9, 1918), 241; Saturday Review, CXXV (March 9, 1918), 198; The Times, March 8, 1918, p. 7; Daily Telegraph, March 8, 1918, p. 4.

[29] Debates, CIII (Feb. 25, 1918), cols. 1100-1.

[30] Ibid., CIII (Feb. 27, 1918), col. 1492.

[31] Ibid., CIII (Feb. 28, 1918), col. 1624. The editor of the National Review, L. J. Maxse, attacked Conservatives in the War Cabinet for allowing Litvinov to remain free; see National Review, LXXI (March, 1918), 101.

to France.[32]

Conservatives increasingly equated the British pacifist movement with Bolshevism. Many could see no difference between the Soviets' pronouncements and those of left-wing Labourites. Ramsay MacDonald's pleas for an understanding of Russia's plight increased their suspicions.[33] Facing MacDonald in the House of Commons, Martin Archer-Shee no doubt expressed the sentiments of fellow backbenchers when he cried, "Your friends are revolutionists."[34] Early in 1918 Tory papers also began accusing the Labour party of harboring Bolshevik sentiments.[35] Anxious to avoid a conflict with Labour, the government even offered them a few innocuous political concessions.[36]

It is difficult to specify the nature of the Tories' fear of domestic revolution. Arno Mayer points to the famous Lansdowne Letter of November 29, 1917 to show that some far-sighted Tories even preferred a compromise peace rather than face social revolution.[37] In his public letter

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[32]Daily Mail, Feb. 11, 1918, p. 2.

[33]E.g., Debates, CIII (Feb. 27, 1918), cols. 1481-82.

[34]Ibid., CIII (Feb. 12, 1918), col. 47.

[35]Daily Mail, June 24, 1918, p. 3; Daily Telegraph, March 8, 1918, p. 4; National Review, LXXI (June, 1918), 432.

[36]Arno J. Mayer, Wilson vs. Lenin: Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918 (Cleveland, 1964), pp.313-28.

[37]Ibid., p. 282.

the respected Tory elder statesman suggested that a continuation of the war would leave the victorious Allies too exhausted to profit from victory.[38] Mayer repeatedly uses the term "Lansdowne Conservatives," which suggests a large and important number of Tory sympathisers. Mayer's thesis must be approached with caution inasmuch as the letter was criticized by most Conservative newspapers, and Lansdowne formulated his ideas long before even the March Revolution.[39] Moreover, Mayer fails to name a single Conservative (other than Lord Milner) who shared Lansdowne's viewpoint. In sum, Mayer seems to overstate the importance of a Lansdowne faction. Alfred Gollin and other historians argue that Milner and certain unnamed Tory leaders had considered a compromise peace by giving Germany a "free hand" in Bolshevik Russia.[40] In fact, the evidence indicates most Conservatives wanted to block a German takeover of Russia.[41]

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[38] Daily Telegraph, Nov. 29, 1917, p. 4.

[39] Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne: a Biography (London, 1929), pp. 463, 469-70.

[40] Gollin, Proconsul in Politics, pp. 522-77; E. H. Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Vols. I-III: The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923 (London, 1951-53), III, 23-25, n. 1.

[41] In his exhaustive research into British policy toward Russia, Ullman, Intervention and the War, p. 66, found nothing to substantiate Gollin's claim. For a recent rejoinder to the Gollin-Mayer thesis, see Beloff, Britain's Liberal Empire, p. 249.

Wartime Intervention

Tories supported Allied intervention in Russia long before it commenced. In January, 1918 the War Cabinet concluded that Japan should send a "sufficient force" to Vladivostok to protect Allied supplies.[42] For the next several months the Allies engaged in intense discussions on Japanese intervention.[43] Balfour also believed it would prevent Germany from exploiting the agricultural resources of western Siberia.[44]

In the confusing period during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, Lockhart often warned Balfour that precipitous action would throw the Bolsheviks into Germany's arms, but the Foreign Secretary replied that he was unable to understand Bolshevik fears because the Japanese would come as friends, not invaders. He reiterated that Britain had no desire to interfere with Russia's domestic affairs.[45] The Bolsheviks increasingly accused British "imperialists" of plotting against them. Such outbursts prompted Balfour

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[42]For Lord Robert Cecil's report of the meeting, see George F. Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920, Vol. I: Russia Leaves the War (Princeton, 1956), pp. 316-17.

[43]Ullman, Intervention and the War, pp. 91-104.

[44]Ibid., pp. 104-5.

[45]Balfour to Lockhart, March 6, 1918, cited by Ibid., p. 123.

to send Lockhart a telegram detailing his growing irritation:

> I accept without reserve the statement that Trotsky and Lenin are not traitors but only fanatics, if those who know them say so. But if this be the case I should have thought that by careful search it would have been possible to detect in Russian policy some aspect that did not favour the Germans and did favour the Allies. There is none that I can find. . . . They hinder us in every way from helping them and have done nothing to help themselves. It is only on the North and the East that the Allies can reach Russia with assistance.[46]

Other Tory ministers were even less concerned with Bolshevik sensitivities. Lord Robert Cecil told reporters, "I should be glad if Japan will take what action she may see fit . . . to prevent the Germanization of Russia."[47]

Conservative papers advocated intervention for various reasons. The Spectator hoped it would prevent the Bolsheviks from capturing the supplies at Vladivostok for Germany. The Times counseled that it would afford "the Russian people time . . . to reconstitute society and the State upon truly democratic lines." The Daily Telegraph claimed that Bolshevik objections were not pronouncements by a sovereign state.[48]

On March 14 Commons defeated an Opposition motion

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[46]Balfour to Lockhart, March 13, 1918, cited by Ibid., pp. 125-26.

[47]The Times, March 11, 1918, p. 5.

[48]Spectator, CXX (April 13, 1918), 391; The Times, March 14, 1918, p. 9; Daily Telegraph, March 2, 1918, p. 4.

against British involvement in any Siberian venture. Among Tory backbenchers, Ronald McNeill denied that the Bolsheviks spoke for Russia. George (later Lord) Lloyd believed they already were nestled in Germany's arms. After characterizing the motion as an insult to a loyal Ally, J. D. Rees stated that only Japan could save "prostrate" Russia from the "Pretorians at Petersburg."[49] Responding for the government, Balfour denied animosity toward the Bolsheviks and defended would-be intervention as an attempt to rescue defenseless Russians from German enslavement.[50] In sum, Tories employed both military and political arguments to support intervention.

Intervention seemed more necessary after Germany launched her Western offensive in March, 1918. Attempts to secure Bolshevik approval were discarded.[51] During the summer British forces landed in North Russia to thwart expected German attacks against Allied supplies in the region. A small detachment occupied Baku to prevent the oil fields from falling into Turkish hands. In North Russia the British soon engaged local Bolshevik forces. More important, tens of thousands of Allied troops poured

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[49] Debates, CIV (March 14, 1918), cols. 525-30, 531-32, 532-35.

[50] Ibid., cols. 545-54.

[51] Ullman, Intervention and the War, pp. 129-35.

into Vladivostok in August.[52]

Throughout this period Tory ministers reiterated the government's intentions. As Lord Robert Cecil told Commons:

> In our view the domestic policy of Russia is a matter for Russia alone. Whatever government the Russians desire to have, the Russians ought to have, and it is not for us to interfere in any way in that matter . . . , but we wish to see Russia preserved as an Allied country, or, if that is impossible, as a non-German one.[53]

Other Conservatives supporting intervention disagreed with these official declarations. Lord Sydenham, an old Tory Imperialist, hoped that Allied armies would succor those Russians "who cherish national patriotism" in their efforts to restore "orderly government."[54] Sir Samuel Hoare, a prominent backbencher, advised the Foreign Secretary that intervention would rally anti-Bolshevik Russians and cautioned that a feeble occupation army would insult them.[55] Henry Page Croft urged the Allies to proclaim a pro-Western tsar, who would then form a

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[52]George F. Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920, Vol. II: The Decision to Intervene (Princeton, 1958), passim.

[53]Debates, CVI (May 16, 1918), cols. 624-25.

[54]Lord Sydenham, "Russia, Germany, and the Allies," The Nineteenth Century and After, LXXXIV (July, 1918), 188-93.

[55]Hoare to Balfour, April 18, 1918, Cambridge, The University Library, Lord Templewood (Sir Samuel Hoare) Papers, Box II, File 2.

New Russian Army in Siberia with a nucleus of 6,000 volunteers from the Russian community in Britain. With the "assistance" of 700,000 Allied troops, the tsar could march westward to destroy the Bolsheviks and, presumably, Germany.[56]

In most Tory papers there were fewer reports on Russia because attention was focused on the climactic struggle in the West; and most British correspondents had left Russia voluntarily during the spring or had been expelled.[57] The Tory press applauded the landings at Murmansk and Archangel.[58] As the summer wore on, they castigated the Allies' failure to send troops more quickly to Vladivostok.[59] The operation was, in the words of the Daily Mail, "too little and too late."[60] Most papers intimated that intervention also would assist the "liberation" of Russia.[61] The Morning Post alone proclaimed

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[56]Page Croft to Law, May 4, 1918, Bonar Law Papers, 83/3/14.

[57]National Review, LXXI (June, 1918), 405-6; The Times, April 19, 1918, p. 5.

[58]The Times, May 7, 1918, p. 7; Daily Mail, July 13, 1918, p. 8.

[59]Daily Telegraph, July 10, 1918, p. 4; Daily Mail, July 13, 1918, p. 8.

[60]Daily Mail, Aug. 17, 1918, p. 2. See also Spectator, CXXI (Aug. 10, 1918), 150, and The Times, Aug. 15, 1918, p. 7.

[61]The Times, May 7, 1918, p. 7; Daily Mail, July 8, 1918, p. 2; Spectator, CXXI (July 20, 1918), 62-63.

that intervention "was evidence that Britain finally decided to interfere in Russia's domestic politics."[62] The Observer and other papers often spoke of a "real Russia" secretly carrying the torch of freedom. This prompted the Daily Telegraph to quip, "It is difficult to find that real Russia."[63] Most newspapers counseled that the Bolsheviks were about to succumb to patriotic Russians.[64] In fact, the Soviets did lose their earlier confidence at this time.

The Cromie Incident

Bolshevik leaders responded to intervention by denouncing Allied "imperialists." On August 30 Lenin was shot and wounded. The Bolsheviks suspected Western complicity. Lockhart was arrested, and on August 31 an armed mob invaded the British embassy in Petrograd. A naval attaché, Captain F. N. Cromie, resisted the intruders but was shot after killing at least one attacker. The embassy was sacked and the staff arrested; Cromie's mutilated body was dragged through the streets

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[62] Morning Post, Aug. 12, 1918, p. 4.

[63] Observer, May 19, 1918, p. 5; Daily Telegraph, July 10, 1918, p. 4.

[64] Daily Mail, July 13, 1918, p. 2; The Times, Aug. 13, p. 7, Aug. 17, 1918, p. 7; Daily Telegraph, Aug. 13, 1918, p. 6.

then left, unburied. A Red terror continued for several weeks.[65]

This incident outraged the Tories more than any preceding Soviet action. Litvinov and two dozen other Bolsheviks in Britain were arrested and detained as hostages. Balfour telegraphed the Soviet Foreign Minister, Gregory Chicherin:

> Should the Russian Soviet government fail to give complete satisfaction or should any further acts of violence be committed against a British subject, His Majesty's Government will hold the members of the Soviet government individually responsible and will make every endeavour to secure that they shall be treated as outlaws by the governments of all civilized nations and that no place of refuge shall be left to them.[66]

Conservative journals rebuked the Soviets in near-hysterical editorials. The Times now called them "savages outside the pale of civilisation." The Daily Mail dismissed them as "so many vampires." Even the Spectator concluded, "It is surely idle to pretend any longer that the Bolshevik leaders are not our bitter enemies."[67]

Previously, the Soviets had not been subjected to such

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[65]Lockhart, British Agent, pp. 305-20.

[66]The Times, Sept. 5, 1918, p. 6. After several weeks of intense negotiations, the two sides agreed to release their hostages; see Ullman, Intervention and the War, pp. 293-96.

[67]The Times, Sept. 5, 1918, p. 6; Daily Mail, Sept. 18, 1918, p. 2; Spectator, CXXI (Sept. 7, 1918), 240. See also Daily Telegraph, Sept. 10, 1918, p. 6, and Saturday Review, CXXVI (Sept. 7, 1918), 809.

intense Tory abuse. Admittedly, such arch-Tory publications as the Morning Post and the National Review were consistently hostile.[68] However, other journals like the Spectator, the English Review, and the Observer made some attempt to understand the ideological basis of the Soviets' actions; they were described occasionally as honest, if misguided,fanatics.[69] At times the press attributed the chaos in Russia to ignorance of democratic institutions.[70] A few papers opened their columns to Soviet sympathizers; even the Daily Mail once printed a perceptive estimate of Bolshevism by Hamilton Fyfe, a well-known partisan.[71] The Times published several letters from Litvinov and even an interview with Trotsky.[72] Before the Cromie affair, editorials rarely mentioned Bolshevik atrocities; the execution of Tsar Nicholas, for example, was virtually ignored.[73] The Cromie incident also incensed Tory

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[68]National Review, LXXI (July, 1918), 102; Morning Post, Aug. 13, 1918, p. 4.

[69]See especially Spectator, CXX (Feb. 16, 1918), 174-75, and English Review, XXVI (February, 1918), 178-79.

[70]Saturday Review, CXXVI (July 20, 1918), 642.

[71]Daily Mail, Jan. 9, 1918, p. 2. The Times, Dec.13, 1917, p. 7, and Observer, Dec. 16, 1917, p. 10, also printed temperate accounts by contributors.

[72]The Times, Dec. 7, 1917, p. 8.

[73]For one of the few editorials, see Morning Post, July 29, 1918, p. 4. No Conservative in Commons expressed regret when the Tsar's death was announced.

politicians. Balfour's harsh note contrasted sharply with his earlier conciliatory statements. In the following decade Tory backbenchers recalled this outrage more often than any other.

Steadily increasing Tory hostility toward the Bolsheviks during 1918 was based on current political and military developments. Soviet ideology was only a minor consideration; indeed, most Conservatives misunderstood or disregarded the genesis of Bolshevism. They probably would have reacted as strongly had the Bolsheviks been capitalists. Politicians and newspapers seeking their ouster were distraught by the specter of a Germanized Russia. However, the unexpected Armistice suddenly eliminated the rationale for intervention. Paradoxically, Tories were not dismayed. Cromie's death and the emerging White movements enabled them to develop and maintain a new justification for overthrowing the Bolsheviks long after the defeat of Germany.

CHAPTER III

POSTWAR INTERVENTION

Attempts to Formulate Policy

When the World War was ending, Britain discarded veiled intervention in favor of a clearly anti-Bolshevik policy. After receiving German peace feelers in early October, Balfour directed various ministers to prepare position papers on future Russian policy.[1] Tory Lord Robert Cecil wrote that because of financial and domestic considerations Britain could not afford to keep troops in Russia indefinitely. As an alternative, he suggested that the Allies combine their armies in a great "crusade" to prevent Bolshevism from engulfing a defeated Germany.[2] Balfour's own memorandum refused to contemplate an Allied invasion: "This country would certainly refuse to see its forces, after more than four years of strenuous fighting, dissipated over the huge expanse of Russia in order to carry out political reforms in a State which is no longer a belligerent Ally." However, he continued, Britain was

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[1]War Cabinet minutes, Oct. 18, 1918, CAB 23/8. For a recent analysis of the formation of British policy at this time, see Michael Fry, "Britain, the Allies, and the Problem of Russia, 1918-1919," Canadian Journal of History, II (September, 1967), 62-84.

[2]Memorandum by Cecil, Oct. 20, 1918, CAB 24/67.

morally obliged to offer arms and money to the White governments founded under Allied protection. The policy was imperfect, but "it is all that we can accomplish in existing circumstances."[3] This memorandum offered a defensible justification for Britain's postwar intervention. To those desiring a total pullout, the Cabinet could say that abandoning the Whites would be dishonorable; moreover, Britain was not really concerned with internal Russian affairs. On the other hand, proponents of a deeper involvement could be told that the government was doing everything possible with such limited means.

Two days after the Armistice a conference of government officials praised Balfour's paper. Lord Robert Cecil summarized the prevailing sentiment, "Our object should be to help the [anti-Soviet] Russians to stand by themselves." The group agreed to maintain British forces in Murmansk, Archangel, and Siberia, and offer de facto recognition and military hardware for the White administration in Siberia.[4]

On November 14 the Cabinet endorsed this plan, but

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[3]Memorandum by Balfour, Nov.1, 1918, Appendix to War Cabinet minutes, Dec. 10, 1918, CAB 23/8. See also a similar memorandum by Sir Henry Wilson (Commander in Chief of the Imperial General Staff), Nov. 13, 1918, cited by Arno J. Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918-1919 (New York, 1967), pp. 310-12.

[4]Minutes of a Conference of Ministers, Nov. 13, 1918, Appendix to War Cabinet minutes, Nov. 14, 1918, CAB 23/8.

several ministers feared the public might consider their policy to be a disguised anti-Bolshevism. After repeating Balfour's rebuttal, Cecil also pointed out that Britain had not supported the anti-Bolshevik Ukrainian puppet government set up recently by the Germans. However, Milner felt that "where there was in existence a friendly anti-Bolshevik Government which it was to our advantage to support, we should support it, and we ought to support it, even though it entailed anti-Bolshevik action." The Cabinet concluded, "The principle stated by Lord Milner should be accepted."[5] Thus Milner stated unequivocally the thesis which Balfour had camouflaged in his memorandum.

On December 10 the Cabinet again returned to the Russian issue. After this time the Prime Minister dominated Cabinet discussions of Russia. Skeptical about recently adopted policy, he stated that because the anti-Bolsheviks were weak, Britain was foolish to keep 10,000 troops in Russia "until Bolshevism was defeated." Moreover, the soldiers would mutiny if stationed there indefinitely. Balfour and Curzon wanted to hold the troops there at least until the Whites were stronger. Discussion was then postponed.[6]

At an Imperial War Cabinet meeting on December 23, War Secretary Winston Churchill emerged as the strongest

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[5]War Cabinet minutes, Nov. 14, 1918, CAB 23/8.

[6]Ibid., Dec. 10, 1918.

advocate of massive Allied intervention. He reasoned that small forces would be useless in the vast expanse of Russia. The Allies must either withdraw completely or invade with enough volunteers to overthrow the Soviets. Lloyd George denounced the latter idea on military and political grounds, adding that the Russian people appeared to be sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. Britain's policy was inconsistent, he continued: she objected to Soviet propaganda, but her troops were shooting Bolsheviks on Russian soil. Lloyd George concluded that recently received Bolshevik peace feelers should be studied seriously. The Imperial War Cabinet accepted the suggestion, with neither Churchill nor his chief supporters, Milner and Curzon, objecting.[7]

In the event, the Soviet proposals were never considered by the Cabinet.[8] At their last meeting before the Peace Conference convened, the Imperial War Cabinet again watched a verbal sparring match between Churchill and Lloyd George. The combatants agreed only that some definitive decision was necessary to avoid "disaster."

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[7]The minutes of the Imperial War Cabinet meeting of December 23, 1918 are summarized in Richard H. Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921, Vol. II: Britain and the Russian Civil War, November, 1918-February, 1920 (Princeton, 1968), pp. 88-93. The Imperial War Cabinet was composed of the British War Cabinet and representatives from the Empire and India.

[8]Ibid., pp. 93-94. Ullman attributes this to Balfour's dilatory attitude in securing definite proposals from Maxim Litvinov, and especially to French opposition.

Since Lloyd George believed that a deeper Allied commitment would strengthen Bolshevism, he hoped the Cabinet would allow "representatives of all sections of Russia" to reconcile their differences at the Peace Conference. Lord Robert Cecil seemed especially concerned that the Whites might be abandoned. The Imperial War Cabinet's conclusion supposedly provided a Russian policy:

> It was generally agreed that, in cases where there was an external aggression by the Bolsheviks against an existing Government with which we had been co-operating, we should be entitled to support that Government in any manner which did not involve military intervention, and that our general policy should be that of . . . "walling off a fire in a mine."[9]

This new "general policy" only eliminated massive intervention. It did not deal with British troops then fighting the Bolsheviks. In essence, the Cabinet did not come to grips with the Russian problem.

These Cabinet discussions offer only limited insights into the views of Tory ministers. Official minutes are sketchy, the opinions of some ministers are unknown, and others, like Lord Robert Cecil, apparently changed their minds frequently. Finally, Lloyd George inhibited his colleagues. In his presence they often said little or did not express their true feelings. Their mechanical affirmations of his suggestions sometimes falsely indicate concurrence. With

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[9]Excerpts from the minutes of the Imperial War Cabinet meeting of December 31, 1918 can be found in David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference (New Haven, 1939), I, 214-17.

the possible exception of Balfour, most Tory ministers may well have desired a postwar invasion of Russia, but they accepted the counter arguments without question. The coincidence of the Cromie incident with the Armistice perhaps crystallized their dormant anti-Bolshevism. However, their moral concern for the Whites cannot be dismissed lightly; the argument never would have been employed so frequently at Cabinet meetings if it were merely a façade. Tories failed to realize that the Whites could overcome the Soviets only if Britain were prepared to offer extensive assistance. Ironically, Churchill did. In sum, Conservative ministers' opinions rested somewhere between the polarized views of Churchill and Lloyd George.

During these months the government did not publicize their Russian policy.[10] Labour M.P.'s expressed concern over the presence of British troops in Russia, but their questions went unanswered.[11] Lord Robert Cecil pleased some M.P.'s when he told Commons on November 18 that Britain would not undertake "serious military operations" anywhere. But he added that the government would have been "more than justified" in responding to the embassy outrage with "arms."[12]

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[10]A leftist publicist has suggested that this silence was part of a governmental conspiracy to prevent the British public from knowing the real policy of massive intervention; see Coates, Armed Intervention in Russia, p. 138.

[11]Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 64-67, examines Labour activity at this time.

[12]Debates, CX (Nov. 18, 1918), col. 3263.

Conservative papers contained few comments on Russia at this time. Official silence prompted the Spectator to remark, "We are all in the dark about the facts."[13] In mid-December the veil was lifted briefly when Lord Milner, without Cabinet approval, published a letter intended to dispel doubts about the government's intentions. He wrote that abandonment of the "thousands" of loyal Russian allies before they were self-supporting would be "contrary to every British instinct of honour and humanity." He concluded:

> If the Allies were all to scramble out of Russia at once, the result would almost certainly be that the barbarism, which at present reigns in a part only of that country, would spread over the whole of it, including the vast regions of Northern and Central Asia, which were included in the dominions of the Tsars. The ultimate consequences of such a disaster cannot be foreseen.[14]

Conservative publications accepted the explanation, but the Daily Telegraph added, "The country is entitled to more information than that."[15] By the end of December a few Conservative journals criticized Milner's suggestion of a phased troop withdrawal. Believing that peace would not come until the Bolshevik "infection" was cured, the Morning Post and the Saturday Review suggested a painless remedy--

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[13] Spectator, CXXI (Dec. 28, 1918), 748. See also The History of The Times, IV, Part I, 458.

[14] The Times, Dec. 19, 1918, p. 8.

[15] Ibid., Dec. 19, 1918, p. 9; Spectator, CXXI (Dec. 21, 1918), 718; Daily Mail, Jan. 10, 1919, p. 4; Daily Telegraph, Dec. 19, 1918, p. 6.

a small army of Allied volunteers to overthrow the Soviets. Even the moderate Spectator asserted that the Allies could not avoid policing the world.[16]

The results of the national election held in December influenced Anglo-Soviet relations.[17] Many issues confronting the coming Peace Conference were debated, but Russia was virtually ignored by Tory politicians and newspapers. The Conservative party printed only one small leaflet on the question. The detailed Election Notes distributed by the Tory Central Office just briefly mentioned Soviet desertion during the war and the excesses of their "experiment."[18]

Domestic "Bolshevism," however, was a lively issue. Stalwart Unionists accused Labour candidates of selling themselves to the Soviets.[19] Even Coalition leaders blurred the distinction between British socialism and Bolshevism. On election eve Lloyd George prophesied Britain's destruction if Labour triumphed.[20] The Tories

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[16]Morning Post, Dec. 21, 1918, p. 4; Saturday Review, CXXVI (Dec. 28, 1918), 1195; Spectator, CXXI (Dec. 28, 1918), 748. See also National Review, LXXII (January, 1919), 547.

[17]For a concise analysis of the election, see A. J. P. Taylor, English History, 1914-1945, Oxford History of England (New York, 1965), pp. 125-30.

[18]Why We are in Russia (London, 1918), pamphlet no. 1916; Election Notes for 1918 (London, 1918), pamphlet no. 1859.

[19]The Times, Dec. 3, 1918, p. 6.

[20]Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking, p. 159.

secured an independent majority, while Labour's pacifist wing and the independent Liberals were decimated. Arno Mayer notes correctly that Lloyd George's triumph was "too complete"; he now needed the Conservatives more than they needed him.[21] Lloyd George soon found that he had to move cautiously with parliament on Russia.

The First Signs of Tory Discontent

In the weeks following the Armistice Britain had developed her Russian policy in isolation from her Allies, but Russia became a common problem soon after the Peace Conference convened in January.[22] Balfour and Cecil were the only Conservative members of the British Empire Delegation, and they were not within the Allies' decision-making elite. At Versailles the Prime Minister immediately asked for a conference with the various Russian governments to discuss peace. At a meeting of the Big Four on January 16, Lloyd George attempted to calm the French, who adamantly opposed any contacts with the Soviets. He was not, he said, advocating Bolshevik recognition, nor was he offering them

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See also What Bolshevist Socialism has done for Russia it would like to do for You (London, 1918), pamphlet no. 1846.

[21]Mayer, Politics and the Diplomacy of Peacemaking, p. 163.

[22]The best work on Russia and the Peace Conference is John M. Thompson, Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace (Princeton, 1966).

a seat at the Peace Conference. He was merely facing reality because the Soviets could not be dislodged by an invasion or even a cordon sanitaire. The French were unmoved, but President Woodrow Wilson supported Lloyd George.[23] The Prime Minister became furious with French intransigence. Bonar Law, the Tory leader, told him that if he pressured France the Coalition would collapse because "the Conservative party felt strongly on the subject of Bolshevism." Lloyd George retorted, "If that is the case the government had better be broken."[24] He ignored the warning.

At a British Empire Delegation meeting on January 20, Balfour backed Law. After Lloyd George threatened to pull Britain out of Russia unless his conference was held, the Delegation agreed to support him.[25] France concurred reluctantly. The Allies asked the warring factions to arrange a truce and then meet with them in mid-February at a Black Sea resort to arrive at "some understanding and agreement by which Russia may work out her own purposes."[26]

The so-called Prinkipo invitation was denounced by

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[23]Excerpts from the minutes of the meeting are reprinted in Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference, I, 217-22.

[24]Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, pp. 105-6.

[25]Excerpts from the minutes of the meeting are reprinted in Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference, I, 226-32.

[26]The entire draft is reprinted in Ibid., pp. 238-39.

conservatives in most Allied countries.[27] Quite surprisingly, it received an initially mixed response in Tory publications. Some journals attacked Lloyd George for negotiating with the Bolshevik usurpers.[28] On the other hand, the Observer, the Spectator, and The Times felt the Bolsheviks should have an opportunity to display their good faith.[29] The Times later reversed this stand when correspondent H. Wickham Steed became convinced that Prinkipo was dividing France and Britain.[30]

The Prinkipo plan soon was imperiled when the Whites refused to negotiate with the Bolsheviks.[31] Against this backdrop the Prime Minister returned to England in early February. Backbench opponents of Prinkipo expressed their views when the new parliament convened. Clement Edwards, leader of the National Democratic party (a pro-Coalition breakaway from the Socialist party), warned the Prime Minister that the country was deeply disturbed by his

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[27]Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking, pp. 432-42.

[28]Morning Post, Jan. 24, 1919, p. 6; Saturday Review, CXXVII (Feb. 1, 1919), 98; Daily Telegraph, Jan. 24, 1919, p. 8; National Review, LXXII (February, 1919), 665-68.

[29]Observer, Jan. 26, 1919, p. 6; Spectator, CXXII (Jan. 25, 1919), 90; The Times, Jan. 23, 1919, p. 11.

[30]The History of The Times, IV, Part I, 465-66.

[31]John A. White, The Siberian Intervention (Princeton, 1950), pp. 334-36.

action.[32] General Henry Page Croft, head of the National party (a splinter group of extremist Tories formed during the war), accused Lloyd George of contravening the electors' anti-Bolshevik mandate.[33] Lord Curzon, Coalition leader in the House of Lords, emphasized that Prinkipo did not envision Bolshevik recognition. Perhaps to protect himself from criticism, he then denounced the Soviets for attempting to foment domestic revolution. Lord Salisbury applauded Curzon's speech but stated that if the plan failed, the government might be forced to use volunteer armies to root out Bolshevism.[34]

To quiet his critics the Prime Minister appeared in Commons on February 12. Before he spoke Tory Walter Guinness characterized Bolshevism as an ephemeral movement financed

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[32] Debates, CXII (Feb. 11, 1919), col. 82. The National Democratic party received 200,000 votes in the 1918 election and seated 9 M.P.'s. It was virulently anti-Bolshevik.

[33] Ibid., col. 86. In December, 1918 National party candidates received 94,000 votes and were successful in only 2 constituencies. In 1920 the members returned to the Tory fold. Very little is known about their operations. In his autobiography, My Life of Strife (London, 1948), Lord Croft provides an incomplete picture. One historian claims the party's ideology was quite similar to that of Continental proto-fascist groups, but he seems to have overdrawn the comparison; see Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking, pp. 77-82.

[34] For the speeches of Curzon and Salisbury, see Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords), 5th ser., XXXIII (Feb. 11,1919), cols. 38-44, 46-47. (Hereinafter referred to as Lords Debates.)

by German gold. Having suffered terribly, loyal Russians now asked for moral encouragement and arms to overcome the usurpers; but the government wanted to abandon them. "The safety of civilisation" required support for the exponents of "law and order." Sir Samuel Hoare saw in Prinkipo "the embodiment of this policy of uncertainty and hesitation." The government must decide unequivocally to support either the Reds or the Whites. Although conceding that the Bolsheviks controlled most of Russia, Hoare believed that recognition would betray the principles upheld by the war. Besides, their absurd economic policies would destroy them "in the near future." Moral and military assistance to the Whites was mandatory. Perhaps with an eye on the Labour benches, Hoare asserted that the Whites were not reactionary, or even conservative, since they included radical socialists.[35]

In his first parliamentary speech on Russia since the Bolshevik Revolution, Lloyd George stressed that Prinkipo was the only realistic way to restore order.[36] His defense apparently failed to convince some Tories. John Gretton followed with a stirring appeal on behalf of the Whites.[37] Lord Lansdowne later voiced his scepticism.[38] Several

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[35] Debates, CXII (Feb. 12, 1919), cols. 183-85, 187-89.

[36] Ibid., cols. 194-98.

[37] Ibid., cols. 198-99.

[38] Lords Debates, XXXIII (Feb. 13, 1919), cols. 96-101.

Cabinet ministers also disapproved. Balfour privately confided his misgivings to Churchill.[39] When the War Cabinet discussed Russia on February 12, Curzon and Churchill characterized Prinkipo as a serious blow to White prestige. They requested additional aid for the anti-Soviets. However, most ministers, including the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Austen Chamberlain, seconded Lloyd George's pessimistic summary of the Whites' position. Lloyd George's objections prevailed, and the meeting ended with nothing to replace Prinkipo, which was finally abandoned a short time later.[40] For the next six weeks the Peace Conference also turned from the Russian question.

During this interlude Balfour reflected on Britain's dilemma. The Red Army, he wrote, was rapidly increasing in strength, while the Whites were unable to advance. Unilateral withdrawal would betray the Whites and perhaps encourage the Bolsheviks to attack the West. Significantly, he could not offer any policy suggestions.[41] In contrast, Winston Churchill called upon the Allies either to attack or make peace with the Bolsheviks: "They are pausing midway between these two courses with an equal dislike of

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[39]Balfour to Churchill, Feb. 16, 1919, British Museum, Lord Balfour Papers, Add. MSS, 49694.

[40]War Cabinet minutes, Feb. 12, 1919, CAB 23/9. The War Cabinet was retained until late in the year.

[41]Memorandum by Balfour, Feb.15, 1919, Balfour Papers, Add. MSS, 49751.

either."[42]

Tory backbenchers also were undecided on a Russian policy. During the lull at Versailles some M.P.'s were content to denounce Prinkipo.[43] A few were interested only in the safety of British troops in Russia.[44] Most were concerned with the fate of the Whites if British troops were withdrawn. Sir Samuel Scott vividly portrayed their apprehension, "If we leave them unprotected we hand them over to be killed by Chinese execution."[45] At this time Conservatives were unimpressed by the Whites' military capabilities. Some Tory backbenchers argued that British troops should remain to prevent a catastrophic union of Bolshevik and German forces.[46] Apparently alone in his party at this time, Lord Lansdowne called for an early withdrawal of British forces for financial and domestic reasons.[47] A few backbenchers objected to further troop

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[42]Churchill to Lloyd George, Feb. 27, 1919, cited by Winston Churchill, The Aftermath, 1918-1928 (New York, 1929), pp. 179-80.

[43]E.g., the remarks of Wilfred Ashley and Walter Guinness in Debates, CXII (Feb. 20, 1919), col. 1103, and CXIII (March 3, 1919), col. 92.

[44]E.g., the speech by Sir J. H. Davidson in Ibid., CXIII (March 3, 1919), col. 162.

[45]Ibid., col. 104.

[46]Ibid., CXIII (March 5, 1919), col. 538.

[47]Lords Debates, XXXIII (Feb. 25, 1919), cols. 273-76.

commitments.[48] However, Martin Archer-Shee, among others, felt that a Western volunteer army of 150,000 men could destroy the Soviets.[49] Finally, many Tory M.P.'s used vague or ambiguous language. In sum, the Tories' suggested Russian policies ranged far and wide.

Most Conservative publications were more reticent about policy. A few right-wing journals continued to urge further Allied involvement. The Observer joined their ranks, "It is time to stop the futile testing of quack nostrums for the Bolshevist disease. There is only one remedy."[50] However, many refused to take a stand until the government acted. The Spectator demanded a positive policy, either pro-Red or pro-White.[51] According to the Daily Mail, "If the Bolsheviks have existed for nearly two years, this was not due to any capacity of theirs, but solely to Allied preoccupation and indecision."[52] In contrast to the few editorials on Russo-British relations,

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[48] E.g., the comments of Frederick Young and Montague Barlow in Debates, CXIII (March 3, 1919), col. 157, and CXIV (March 27, 1919), col. 753.

[49] Ibid., CXIV (March 27, 1919), col. 754. See also Lord Denbigh's letter in The Times, March 29, 1919, p. 7.

[50] Observer, April 13, 1919, p. 11. See also Saturday Review, CXXVII (March 29, 1919), 294.

[51] Spectator, CXXII (April 12, 1919), 587. See also L. J. Maxse (editor of the National Review) to Hoare, March 3, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box 11, File 2.

[52] Daily Mail, May 13, 1919, p. 6. See also The Times, May 5, 1919, p. 13.

Tory publications abounded in anti-Soviet polemics.

The Emergence of Rabid Anti-Bolshevism

After the Cromie incident Tory papers generally did not comment on the Soviets again until the spring of 1919. But during the remainder of the year virtually every Tory journal frequently expressed hatred for Bolshevism. The Daily Telegraph portrayed it as

> a pitiless policy of blood and fire directed against all men, women, and children who attempt or are believed to be sympathetic with any attempt to impede the onward progress of these monsters of disorder, murder, and robbery, who appeal to the lowest instincts of the ignorant, the needy, and the criminals.[53]

The Daily Mail saw Bolshevism as a disease feeding on hunger and want, "a barren policy of disorganization and destruction." To the Spectator it was "rooted in the foulest crimes of which the human brute is capable." The Morning Post characterized it as a "terrible combination of Yellow Peril, Red Terror, and the Black Hand."[54] Such evaluations were prompted, in part, by reports received from Russia.

Tory papers no longer employed correspondents in Bolshevik-occupied areas, their information being supplied

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[53] Daily Telegraph, March 20, 1919, p. 8.

[54] Daily Mail, May 13, 1919, p. 6; Spectator, CXXIII (Nov. 22, 1919), 678; Morning Post, Jan. 16, 1919, p. 4. See also Observer, Feb. 16, 1919, p. 9.

chiefly by reporters in Vladivostok, Helsinki, Warsaw, and White-controlled areas who routinely transmitted to London virtually every story or rumor provided by the Whites. The Helsinki correspondent for The Times once described dog flesh selling openly in Petrograd markets for fifty roubles per pound; rats presumably were more palatable because they were bringing a higher price.[55] Such fictitious accounts were published without editorial evaluation. A Daily Mail editorial of March 7, 1919 contained a typical description of life under the Bolsheviks, telling how they murdered their enemies and starved the populace into submission. Chinese mercenaries shot all West Europeans on sight. Marriage was outlawed; women were "nationalized" and became mere chattels. Russia had become a gigantic brothel, a "living hell" on earth. Even such moderate Tory publications as the Spectator painted similar portraits.[56]

Their readers perhaps relished these tales. The Times once announced that a widespread public demand required reprinting a letter from a British officer in South Russia who had recounted a series of alleged Bolshevik excesses which would have chilled the most avid reader of

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[55] The Times, March 17, 1919, p. 10.

[56] Daily Mail, March 7, 1919, p. 4; Spectator, CXXIII (July 5, 1919), 2. References to "Chinese mercenaries" appeared quite frequently. Apparently they were Central Asiatic Bolshevik troops.

Gothic horrors.[57] Some Tory M.P.'s were distressingly impressionable: Sir Park Goff once wrote, "Chinese legions, who perform executions for the Bolshevists at 50 roubles a head, are selling the flesh of their victims for human consumption, passing it off as veal at fabulous prices."[58]

The Conservative press indicted the Bolsheviks for much of the turmoil then rocking the Western world. In this regard Bolshevism was viewed usually as an imperialism or as a disease, frequently influenza. The Observer called it an "all-devouring" contaminator. The Times agreed: "With a logic-mad creed like this moderation is suicide. It must be extreme or perish. It must force itself on other nations." The Spectator stated: "To expect them to settle down as an orderly political party is very much like expecting a reformed Bengal tiger to draw a milk cart."[59]

The ubiquitous Soviets also were accused of promoting political, social, and industrial unrest in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.[60] The Times once reported an abortive "Bolshevik" revolution in the remote Goulburn Islands, located off the coast of northern Australia: a native had

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[57] The Times, Nov. 14, 1919, pp. 13-14.

[58] Ibid., March 15, 1919, p. 9.

[59] Observer, Jan. 26, 1919, p. 6; The Times, Aug. 12, 1919, p. 11; Spectator, CXXII (Jan. 25, 1919), 90.

[60] The Times, April 23, 1919, p. 13.

become infected through contact with a passing European ship.[61]

Surprisingly, Tory papers minimized the role of Soviet agents and money in fomenting unrest in Britain. Even the right-wing Saturday Review dismissed rumors of their domestic machinations as "nonsense." A number of Tory backbenchers agreed, but it is unclear if their words were motivated by conviction or by a desire to avoid exacerbating domestic tensions.[62] However, they spared no words in condemning so-called "British Bolshevists," a label applied to Soviet apologists. Labour-sponsored action groups, such as the "Hands off Russia Committee," were especially abused.[63]

Conservatives remained deeply concerned with the specter of German domination of Bolshevism. The Daily Mail, for one, proclaimed that the Red Army depended on Germany for supplies. But most newspapers were less certain. At one point The Times stated that the Red Army was directed

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[61] Ibid., April 15, 1919, p. 11.

[62] Saturday Review, CXXVIII (Aug. 16, 1919), 145. Tory democrat Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck called it a "pure bogey"; see Debates, CXIII (March 17, 1919), col. 1720. See also the doubts expressed by Sir William Hall in Debates, CXIV (April 2, 1919), col. 1330. The National Review, LXXIII (March, 1919), 16, agreed.

[63] E.g., The Times, Jan. 20, p. 4, Aug. 12, p. 12, Nov. 11, 1919, p. 16.

secretly by German generals employing German conscripts; later it denied any Russo-German affiliation. The Saturday Review once claimed that the Bolsheviks were sustained by German support, but later it called for German assistance to topple them.[64]

Some Tory publications grudgingly began to recognize the abilities of Bolshevik leaders. The press previously had described them as a group, never as individuals. In March, 1919 The Times published a series which characterized Lenin as a maniacal genius with Spartan personal habits. Trotsky and others were called men of boundless energy and organizing talents. The Observer saw Lenin as a new Mahomet, "an honest and sinister fanatic of immense ability whom some of those who have had the best opportunity of studying him regard him as the most formidable single figure thrown up by the war."[65]

During the war a few Tory journals had made halting attempts to describe Bolshevik doctrine. Now they ignored Marxism almost completely. Occasional references to the "mad creed" went unexplained. In 1919 The Times mentioned

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[64] Daily Mail, March 25, 1919, p. 4; The Times, March 25, p. 13, July 17, 1919, p. 13; Saturday Review, CXXVII (Jan. 11, 1919), 25, CXXVIII (Oct. 25, 1919), 377.

[65] The Times, March 25, p. 11, March 26, p. 11, April 7, 1919, p. 10; Observer, March 30, 1919, p. 10. See also Daily Telegraph, March 20, 1919, p. 8.

Marxism only twice in its editorials pages, and these citations were superficial and hardly accurate:

> The Bolshevist ideal state would stifle the soul and mind of the individual more completely than the narrowest, the most degrading of religions, and would deliver his body and all of his possessions to an abject and hopeless slavery. Lenin and his accomplices are prepared to wade to their utopia through a sea of innocent blood. Were man ever to endure Bolshevist equality, he would assuredly be "little more than a monkey."[66]

The government supported Tory depictions of Bolshevism by publishing a White paper on April 5 entitled, "A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia."[67] The report had originated with a Cabinet decision in November, 1918 to inform the public of Bolshevik excesses. Lord Curzon directed Foreign Office officials to interview recently repatriated residents of Russia and to solicit reports from civil and military officials assigned to the White governments.[68]

The ninety-page report rivaled and often surpassed the credulous narratives printed concurrently in Tory papers. Exaggerated tales by repatriated citizens are understandable because many had been imprisoned by the

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[66] The Times, Oct. 22, 1919, p. 13; see also April 1, 1919, p. 13.

[67] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 1, 1919), Cmnd. 8, (London, 1919).

[68] War Cabinet minutes, Nov. 14, 1918, CAB 23/8.

Bolsheviks. Anonymity also protected them. However, the government accepted at face value the dispatches filed by their agents. General Frederick Poole, for example, wrote from South Russia:

> Commissariats of free love have been established in several towns, and respectable women flogged for refusing to yield. Decree of nationalisation of women has been put into force, and several experiments made to nationalise children.[69]

Most of these stories were based on information supplied by "trustworthy" Whites, who either had witnessed the alleged incidents or who had "close connections" in Soviet-occupied areas.

The Conservative Central Office reprinted the White Paper under the title, "Bolshevism in Russia or Revolutionary Socialism in Practice."[70] The report also had a great impact on the Tories, who were then dealing with another of Lloyd George's attempts to solve the Russian problem.[71]

Tory Pressure Intensifies

After the Russian factions failed to meet at Prinkipo, Lloyd George and President Wilson sent an unofficial mission to Moscow to request the Soviets' terms for ending the civil

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[69] "A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia," p. 19.

[70] (London, 1919), pamphlet [no number].

[71] Observer, April 13, 1919, p. 11, and National Review, LXXIII (May, 1919), 416, offered favorable comments.

war. William Bullitt, a member of the American delegation at Versailles, led the group.[72] Bullitt found that the Bolshevik proposals were close to the terms that the United States and Britain already had agreed upon: an immediate cease fire, withdrawal of all foreign troops, demobilization of all native Russian armies and, significantly, maintenance of the territorial and political status quo.

When Bullitt returned to Paris at the end of March, he discovered that his own delegation had lost interest in the project, but he met with Lloyd George on March 27. When handed the Soviet proposals, the Prime Minister pointed to a typical anti-Bolshevik editorial in the Daily Mail (Paris edition) and exclaimed, "As long as the British Press is doing this kind of thing how can you expect me to be sensible about Russia?" Although believing that the terms were sincere, Lloyd George argued that the British public would not accept them because of Bullitt's youth and known radicalism.[73] Written by the editor, H. Wickham Steed, the Daily Mail article also intimated that the Allies

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[72]For the details of the Bullitt mission, see Thompson, Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace, pp. 131-77, 233-47.

[73]William Bullitt, The Bullitt Mission (New York, 1919), pp. 66-67.

were contemplating another Prinkipo-type scheme.[74]

London soon was filled with rumors about a negotiated settlement with the Soviets.[75] In Commons on April 3 Sir Samuel Hoare asked if the government knew a William "Bullet" [sic] who had arrived recently in Paris with Bolshevik peace proposals. Given advance notice, Bonar Law replied that the Prime Minister had just disavowed any knowledge of Bullitt.[76] This denial and a later one failed to satisfy disgruntled backbenchers.[77] During the same week the circulation of the White Paper on Bolshevism intensified Tory unrest.

After receiving information documenting Bullitt's mission, Clement Edwards moved an adjournment of the House on April 9. Although he was unsure of some of the Soviet proposals: "There are one or two terms that we do know of to a certainty, and one of the terms is this, that the whole of the Russian people are to be recognized as subjects of the Bolshevik regime." Edwards charged that "if for any

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[74]The editorial is reprinted in H. Wickham Steed, Through Thirty Years, 1892-1922: a Personal Narrative (Garden City, 1924), II, 303-4. Steed had just been named editor of The Times (succeeding Geoffrey Dawson) by Lord Northcliffe, the owner of both newspapers. A member of the American delegation had informed Steed of the Bullitt mission.

[75]E.g., The Times, April 3, 1919, p. 11.

[76]Debates, CXIV (April 3, 1919), cols. 1327-30, 1334.

[77]Ibid., CXIV (April 7, 1919), col. 1648.

reasons . . . this country saw fit to grant recognition in that way, the vast majority of the House of Commons would repudiate it."[78]

In seconding the adjournment motion Henry Page Croft emphasized that discussions with the Soviets would weaken Britain's stand against her own "Bolsheviks." If the government did not stand by "real Russia," Bolshevism would spread to Germany and possibly China, bringing "the end of civilisation, the end of Christianity. . . ." Walter Guinness concurred.[79] Other Tory speakers echoed Sir John Davidson who remarked, "Personally, I have never been in favour of making a pact with the devil."[80] Edwards withdrew his motion after being assured that the Prime Minister would be informed of their concern.

On Page Croft's advice, alarmed backbenchers sent a telegram to Lloyd George urging the government not to recognize the Bolsheviks. Conservatives probably were heavily represented among the 200 signatories.[81] When shown this telegram and another protesting against a soft peace with Germany, Bonar Law convinced the Prime Minister to return

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[78] Ibid., CXIV (April 9, 1919), cols. 2142-48.

[79] Ibid., cols. 2153, 2154-60.

[80] Ibid., cols. 2165-66.

[81] The Times, April 10, 1919, p. 13. Apparently no list of the signatories has survived.

home "to quell the threatened uprising."[82]

Lloyd George was greeted by hostile Tory press editorials.[83] When addressing parliament on April 16, he attempted to dispel Tory fears by again denying that Soviet recognition had ever been discussed. Although denouncing Bolshevik horrors, he ruled out an invasion on financial grounds. A binding moral obligation necessitated continued support for the Whites and the Border States, but he still hoped for a peaceful solution.[84]

Subsequent Tory speakers responded cautiously. Samuel Hoare seemed quite relieved, but he asserted that only White recognition would destroy Bolshevism and end the vacillation at the Peace Conference. Walter Guinness apologized to the Prime Minister for the troubles caused by his parliamentary critics, yet he, too, echoed Hoare's suggestion. J. G. Jameson rebuked the containment policy, "You can keep sheep in a ringed fence but not ravenous wolves, like the Bolsheviks." Since he believed Britain eventually would have to fight, "I think it would pay the Government to strike a blow at the vitals of Bolshevism and prevent it running over Europe."[85]

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[82] Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference, I, 375.

[83] E.g., Observer, April 13, 1919, p. 11, and The History of The Times, IV, Part I, 499.

[84] Debates, CXIV (April 16, 1919), cols. 2939-46.

[85] Ibid., cols. 2984-86, 2995-96, 3021-22.

Although Tory press criticisms did not cease, Lloyd George survived the threatened parliamentary revolt unscathed.[86] By denying any knowledge of Bullitt he showed a willingness to sacrifice truth for expediency. Moreover, his uncompromising attack on Bolshevism during the debate contrasted sharply with his moderate tone at Cabinet meetings. Ironically, the crisis had been fueled by back-bench misunderstanding of the Soviet proposals. Both sets of terms had called for all Russian governments to retain control of their occupied territories. But shortly after the April debate it appeared as if the Tories should never again have to worry about the Soviets.

Kolchak's Advance and Tory Hopes

Until the spring of 1919 White forces had been unable to advance against the Red Army. Then in March Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak's Siberian army launched a three-pronged attack. By the end of April his forces had driven to within 200 miles of Moscow. In the South Denikin's Volunteer Army moved northward. A White army was formed in Northwest Russia. At the same time, the various anti-Bolshevik governments acknowledged Kolchak as their supreme

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[86] E.g., The Times, n.d., Morning Post, n.d., cited by Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking, p. 645; and Daily Mail, April 17, 1919, p. 4.

ruler.[87]

Anticipating a possible Bolshevik collapse, the War Cabinet decided on April 29 that the Allies should conditionally recognize Kolchak.[88] In Paris Lloyd George also strongly supported the Whites. He finally convinced a reluctant President Wilson that the Allies could prevent Kolchak from wandering from his self-professed democratic path.[89] On May 26 the Allies offered conditional recognition to Kolchak, but his affirmative reply was not received before a Red counteroffensive in June had forced him to retreat rapidly. The proposal was then dropped.[90]

When Kolchak moved forward, Conservative papers abandoned their non-committal stand on Russo-British relations by rallying around the White banner. With each new victory they increasingly demanded full de jure recognition.[91] Many publications criticized the Allies' con-

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[87]John Swettenham, Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1919, and the Part Played by Canada (Toronto, 1967), pp. 182-184, 252, 258-60; Thompson, Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace, pp. 268-77.

[88]Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, pp. 162-63.

[89]Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking, pp. 818-24.

[90]The Allied note and extracts from Kolchak's reply are reprinted in Churchill, The Aftermath, pp. 183-86.

[91]E.g., Daily Telegraph, May 23, 1919, p. 10; The Times, May 19, 1919, p. 13; and National Review, LXXIII (June, 1919), 486.

ditional terms.[92] Tory backbenchers also jumped on the White bandwagon. Before the mid-April Easter recess, Thomas Inskip was the only one among them who took a stand against recognition at the moment.[93]

Throughout the entire period of Allied intervention, many Tory M.P.'s tried to rally support for the Whites, and their extra-parliamentary activities peaked during Kolchak's spring offensive. Those most interested in the Russian question joined the Coalition Foreign Affairs Group. Founded early in 1919 it included about thirty-five Conservatives and very few Coalition Liberals and Labourites. Samuel Hoare was elected Chairman, and Walter Guinness served as Secretary. Tory members represented all sectors within the party, including young progressive backbenchers like Earl Winterton, Edward Wood (later Lord Halifax), William Ormsby-Gore, Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, and Oswald Mosley.

After studying the Russian problem the Group concluded that Western security required the destruction of Bolshevism. To this end, they advocated extensive military assistance for the Whites.[94] Guinness and Hoare were their

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[92] Spectator, CXXII (May 31, 1919), 689; Daily Telegraph, May 27, 1919, p. 10; Morning Post, May 27, 1919, cited by Coates, Armed Intervention in Russia, p. 213.

[93] Debates, CXIV (March 27, 1919), col. 756.

[94] Hoare to Churchill, Feb. 27, 1919, Lloyd George Papers, F/8/3/24. This letter also included a list of the Group's membership.

parliamentary spokesmen. Apart from speeches, their main activity seems to have been writing letters to their Cabinet hero, Winston Churchill. Whenever the Whites were on the verge of a military breakthrough, the Group promptly urged him to increase British support.[95]

The Group established close contacts with White representatives at Versailles. The task was made easier by Hoare's personal friendship with such prominent figures as Peter Struve and Sergei Sazonov, Kolchak's political representative in Paris. Hoare frequently updated them on British public opinion and cautioned them to wear a liberal mantle.[96] When White dignitaries visited England, Hoare or Guinness often acted as their hosts. In May, 1919 Hoare arranged for Sazonov to meet unofficially with several ministers. Although a scheduled meeting with Churchill was never held, Sazonov did talk with a number of Tory back-benchers.[97] Private dinner parties given by Guinness and Hoare in his honor were attended by a few Cabinet ministers,

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[95]For a typical plea, see Coalition Foreign Affairs Group to Churchill, July 12, 1919, Ibid., F/9/1/7.

[96]E.g., Hoare to Struve, May 28, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3. One Tory M.P., Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, considered a request by Sazonov that he go to Paris to work closely with the Whites, but at the last moment he became Austen Chamberlain's parliamentary private secretary; see Locker-Lampson to Chamberlain, Jan. 28, 1919, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 24/1/36.

[97]The Times, May 27, 1919, p. 14. See also Hoare to Churchill, May 14, 1919, and Hoare to Lord Crewe (ambassador to France), May 20, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3.

including Lord Curzon.[98] General Golovin, Kolchak's military representative, visited at least twice in 1919. In March he discussed the Whites' prospects with the Group.[99] In May he pleaded for greater assistance. During this latter visit Hoare arranged for Golovin to see Churchill privately. After two meetings with the War Secretary, he left England, apparently satisfied.[100]

The Coalition Foreign Affairs Group had little influence on Britain's Russian policy. Their champion in the Cabinet, Churchill, was himself often in a minority of one. But, unlike Churchill, the Group never sought an invasion of Russia. Hoare realized their helplessness, "There was little that I or the group of Members with whom I work could accomplish."[101]

Many anti-Bolshevik Tories sent letters to Conservative newspapers, and a few wrote press articles, usually weaving stories of Bolshevik horrors with urgent pleas on

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[98] Hoare to Sazonov, May 12, 1919, Ibid.

[99] See Hoare's letter in The Times, July 7, 1920, p. 10.

[100] Hoare to Churchill, May 3, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3; Arnot, The Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain, p. 173. When these interviews were made public in July, 1920, Labourites attacked the government for having allowed them; see Debates, CXXXI (July 5, 1920), cols. 1006-9. Apparently they were held without the Cabinet's knowledge.

[101] Hoare to Churchill, May 31, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3.

behalf of the Whites.[102] Some wrote for The Russian Outlook, a prominent English anti-Bolshevik weekly.[103]

Several long-established Russo-British fraternal organizations which had turned anti-Bolshevik often invited Tory speakers to their functions.[104] The British Russia Club was the most important of these groups. Founded in 1918, primarily by British businessmen expelled from Russia, it served as a clearing house for the latest information from Russia. Although the Club was non-partisan, a number of Tory politicians were involved in its activities. Sir George Buchanan, the last ambassador to Russia and now an outspoken anti-Bolshevik Tory, served as president.[105] Prominent Tories and White Russians often spoke at its

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[102] E.g., Samuel Hoare, "Russia and the Allies," National Review, LXXIII (April, 1919), 221-33.

[103] E.g., Park Goff, "Guilty or Not Guilty," The Russian Outlook, I (May 10, 1919), 6-7, and Henry Page Croft, "Our Duty to Russia," The Russian Outlook, I (May 24, 1919), 60. This journal was edited by Stafford Talbot, a noted anti-Bolshevik, and it dealt with the latest information on the Russian civil war.

[104] For news of the meetings of the Russian Luncheon Club, the Russo-British Fraternity, and the United Russia Societies Association, see The Times, Dec. 23, 1918, p. 8, Jan. 7, p. 7, April 12, 1919, p. 10.

[105] See George Buchanan, "Great Britain and Russia," National Review, LXXIII (May, 1919), 346-58, and his My Mission to Russia, II, 255. For a review of the Club's activities, see The Russian Outlook, I (May 10, 1919), 11.

frequent meetings.[106]

Conservative clubs, like the Primrose League and the British Empire Union, sponsored programs and seminars on the Soviet threat.[107] Dozens of organizations were founded specifically to combat Bolshevism; most were concerned primarily with indigenous "Bolsheviks."[108] Although many of these groups vanished quickly, they underscored widespread concern with the twin threats of Soviet Russia and domestic unrest.[109] A few Tory backbenchers organized pro-White demonstrations at which anti-Bolshevik rhetoric reached a delirious pitch.[110] But Conservatives proved to be fair-weather friends.

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[106] The Times, May 28, p. 15, July 18, 1919, p. 12, listed two of these meetings.

[107] For a report, see Ibid., May 15, 1919, p. 7.

[108] A listing of these organizations can be found in Ibid., Feb. 17, p. 5, June 5, 1919, p. 11. For a report on the newly founded National Security Union, see The Russian Outlook, I (May 17, 1919), 34-39.

[109] C. L. Mowat, Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940 (Chicago, 1955), pp. 17-43, reviews the domestic scene at this time.

[110] Reports of such large Conservative-organized demonstrations can be found in The Times, Feb. 10, 1919, p. 10, and The Russian Outlook, I (May 27, 1919), supplement, i-vii. For a typical Conservative diatribe at such meetings, see Lord Ampthill's speech in The Times, May 16, 1919, p. 9.

Tory Concern Ebbs

After Kolchak began retreating in June, Tories became less vocal. The government also became more reticent: after Lloyd George's April 16 speech, Russia was discussed in parliament just a few times until mid-summer. On these occasions Churchill defended British policy against increasing Labour opposition.[111] Then, without warning, the government announced in Commons on July 29 that British troops in North Russia were to be withdrawn before the winter.

The decision came after months of Cabinet debate. On March 4 the Cabinet had agreed to terminate the North Russian operations in the coming summer because of the serious drain on the Treasury. The Cabinet also feared a public outcry if the conscripts stayed in the frozen wastes for another winter.[112] A short time later Churchill persuaded Lloyd George to send a relief force of 8,000 volunteers to cover the North Russian retreat. In the meantime, Kolchak's spring offensive had advanced to within 200 miles of the Allied forces at Archangel. Churchill and Curzon wanted to link up with the White forces, but

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[111] Debates, CXVI (May 29, 1919), cols. 1519-30, and CXVI (June 6, 1919), cols. 2447-74.

[112] War Cabinet minutes, March 4, 1919, cited by Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, pp. 134-35, 172-73.

their plan was thwarted by Kolchak's unexpected reverses.[113]

At a meeting of the full Cabinet on July 29 the Russian question was debated in detail. Kolchak's retreat had convinced Lloyd George not to supply the Siberian Whites because they lacked popular backing. However, Denikin should be supported until early in the following year. The Prime Minister called his new policy a "medium course." Churchill protested that Kolchak could reverse his defeats, and he did not want to confront Denikin with a definite timetable. A Liberal and a Labour minister called for immediate peace, and some Conservatives also were uneasy. Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs Lord Curzon characterized Kolchak as a "reactionary." He would help Denikin only if he had a reasonable chance of succeeding. Austen Chamberlain warned that the Treasury could not support the Whites much longer. The Minister without Portfolio, Sir Eric Geddes, wanted Denikin to halt his offensive and consolidate his territory. If he did not, Geddes explained, "There was no end to the extent to which we might commit ourselves, and it was not clear what object was in view." Bonar Law strongly supported Lloyd George's policy, which did prevail. The Cabinet also reaffirmed Lloyd George's

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[113]Ross Horning, "Winston Churchill and British Policy Toward Russia, 1918-1919" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The George Washington University, 1958), pp. 271-97, reviews these events.

promise (first given in Commons on April 16) not to negotiate with the Bolsheviks.[114] At this meeting Conservative ministers first enunciated doubts about intervention. Curzon's remarks reflected a belief that the Whites were on the brink of disaster. Leading Tory backbenchers generally concurred.

Before Churchill announced the decisions in Commons that afternoon, Lord Robert Cecil, now a private Member, attracted considerable attention by urging the government to promote a ceasefire and oversee peace negotiations, "without reference to the justness of the quarrel." He had arrived at this conclusion, he explained, after realizing that a creed could not be destroyed by armed might. If intervention continued,Bolshevism would spread throughout the world; if left alone it would die.[115] Sir Samuel Hoare probably stated the feelings of most Tories when he later criticized Cecil:

> In his desire for peace, a desire that all of us share, he draws no distinction between the Russians who have fought for the Allies and the Russians who at the most critical moment in the history of the War betrayed our cause at Brest-Litovsk. It is the duty of the Allies to make every conceivable effort to restore peace to Russia, to take any and every fair chance for peace that comes within their reach, but never again to make the fatal mistake of Prinkipo by which they confounded friend and enemy. If

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[114] War Cabinet minutes, July 29, 1919, CAB 23/11.

[115] Debates, CXVIII (July 29, 1919), cols. 1982-85.

> and when there is to be an Armistice, the proposal must come from Kolchak or Denikin. The attempt to impose an Armistice upon our Allies, still more the attempt to treat them upon the same footing as our enemies, is not only a false and ungenerous policy but also a foolish and hopeless repetition of the Prinkipo failure.[116]

Tory backbenchers received Churchill's speech on July 29 without comment, perhaps because he had already informed Hoare and Guinness of the Cabinet's decision.[117] The two spokesmen for the Coalition Foreign Affairs Group replied that they had arrived at the same conclusion. Fearing a Labour attack on the new policy, they even lined up ten "trusty" M.P.'s to assist Churchill if necessary.[118]

Several weeks earlier Hoare had conceded that growing domestic opposition necessitated an early withdrawal of all British troops.[119] But his Group was not prepared to abandon the Whites altogether.[120] When Hoare told Sazonov

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[116]For the entire analysis, see Samuel Hoare, "The Russian Problem," The Nineteenth Century and After, LXXXVI (September, 1919), 426-35.

[117]For his speech, see Debates, CXVIII (July 29, 1919), cols. 1985-99.

[118]Hoare to Churchill, July 30, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3.

[119]Hoare to Curzon, July 15, 1919, cited by Arthur Slavin, "Churchill's 'Bolshevism on the Brain': Intervention and Hypocrisy," Bucknell Review, XV (March, 1967), 82. Few Tory politicians objected to the troop withdrawal. For a dissenting view, see Lord Sydenham's letter in The Times, Sept. 23, 1919, p. 6.

[120]Hoare to Churchill, July 30, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3.

about the new policy, he explained that Kolchak's collapse had had a disastrous effect, "even upon many influential people to whom we have previously looked for support." The Whites thus should have been happy that the Cabinet had not deserted Denikin.[121] Hoare's somber tone contrasted sharply with his earlier enthusiasm.

Only the Saturday Review and the National Review seemed disappointed by the pullout of British troops.[122] Yet most Tory journals deplored the new policy toward the Whites, charging that it would strengthen the Bolsheviks. None of these papers, however, mentioned the adverse domestic consequences.[123] Although rebuking the government's "half-cock policy," the Spectator could suggest doing only "what we can" to help the Whites. As if to wash its hands, it concluded: "It is foolish for newspapers to try to decide what ought to be done when the facts are not known to them and there is necessarily no basis for judgement."[124] This comment reflected the Tory press' dilemma. All were dissatisfied with the new policy, but none could offer a

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[121]Hoare to Sazonov, July 30, 1919, Ibid.

[122]Saturday Review, CXXVIII (Aug. 2, 1919), 97; National Review, LXXIII (August, 1919), 749-54.

[123]The Times, July 25, 1919, p. 13; Observer, Aug. 3, 1919, p. 8; Daily Mail, July 29, p. 6, Aug. 5, 1919, p. 4.

[124]Spectator, CXXIII (Aug. 2, 1919), 140.

feasible alternative. Before long, the Whites' defeat opened a new possiblity.

Between August and November, 1919 the political map of Russia changed rapidly. Most British troops were withdrawn and Kolchak's retreat turned into a rout as his tattered forces fled eastward across Siberia. Denikin continued his advance until mid-October when he was only 250 miles from Moscow. But a determined Red attack drove the Volunteer Army back to the Crimea within five months. On October 20 Yudenich's drive was halted in the suburbs of Petrograd. A massive Bolshevik counteroffensive then annihilated the Northwest Army.[125]

Churchill was the only government minister who retained a shred of hope.[126] By September Conservative publications had become noticeably pessimistic. The Saturday Review conceded that financial difficulties prohibited greater aid for the Whites. The Spectator considered abandoning them: "The knowledge that they are thrown upon their own resources may act as the right tonic,

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[125]Swettenham, Allied Intervention in Russia, pp. 212-66, reviews these developments.

[126]Memorandum by Churchill, Nov. 12, 1919, CAB 24/93. For an opposite view, see Curzon to Balfour, Aug. 21, 1919, E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919 - 1939, ser. 1, III (London, 1949), pp. 519-26. (Hereinafter cited as British Documents.)

where all other medicines have failed."[127] On September 21 J. L. Garvin began groping for a new approach to Russia. Believing "non-intervention by itself cannot be a policy," and assuming the Soviets sincerely desired peace, he decided that "a new channel into Russia may exist, and with it . . . may be a new and better opportunity of extending to the Russian people . . . , economic help." Garvin seemed to suggest a rapprochement.[128]

When Denikin and Yudenich advanced in mid-October, some Conservative papers attempted to recapture the enthusiasm of the past spring, but their fervor was superficial.[129] The Times did not even comment when Yudenich's troops were in front of Petrograd. After the Soviet counter-offensives, the Daily Telegraph and The Times questioned further involvement. The Saturday Review remarked bluntly, "Really there is not a pin to choose between Reds and

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[127]Saturday Review, CXXVIII (Sept. 13, 1919), 237; Spectator, CXXIII (Sept. 20, 1919), 360. See also Daily Telegraph, Sept. 24, 1919, p. 10. Lord Beaverbrook's Daily Express, an independent newspaper generally following a Conservative editorial policy, felt similarly; see Kenneth Young, Churchill and Beaverbrook (New York, 1967), pp. 54-55.

[128]For the development of Garvin's ideas, see Observer, Aug. 24, p. 8, Sept. 14, p. 10, Sept. 21, 1919, p. 10.

[129]Representative editorials from the Conservative press at this time can be found in Coates, Armed Intervention in Russia, p. 267. See also Hoare to Churchill, Oct. 16, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3.

Whites, both being treacherous barbarians." It concluded, "Morally, all the Russians are not worth the bones of a British grenadier."[130]

Several Tory backbenchers agreed. On November 5 a group of Opposition M.P.'s introduced a motion calling for a total withdrawal. Samuel Hoare responded for what had become a shrinking band of die-hard Tories. Although admitting that the electorate was disenchanted, he feared that a pullout would result in a German takeover of Russia. He concluded with a feeble plea for recognition of Kolchak. J. D. Rees seconded this analysis.[131] However, several Tories criticized intervention. F. A. Macquisten expressed contempt for all Russians, "I do not care from what source the Government flows, whether from a Czar or Soviet or in any other form." Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, a member of the Coalition Foreign Affairs Group, explained that he was not "one of those who see red when the subject of Russia is mentioned." In his view, "The more money we squander in Russia the greater does the strength of Bolshevism become." Intervention had divided the public, increased prices and taxation, and driven millions of Russians into the Soviet

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[130] Daily Telegraph, Nov. 4, 1919, p. 13; The Times, Nov. 4, 1919, p. 13; Saturday Review, CXXVIII (Nov. 1, 1919), 405.

[131] For the speeches by Hoare and Rees, see Debates, CXX (Nov. 5, 1919), cols. 1581-86, 1591-96.

camp. Like Cecil, he concluded that Bolshevism was an idea immune to brute force. For reasons of "enlightened self-interest," Britain should seek peace.[132] Churchill's spirited defense of limited assistance probably convinced most skeptical Conservatives to back the government. Only Cavendish-Bentinck supported the Opposition motion, which was defeated easily.[133]

By early November the Tories' formerly unanimous defense of the Whites had become unglued. Domestic unrest and fiscal problems undoubtedly helped to effect the change but, more importantly, it was caused by the White military failure. Few Tories, however, advocated normal relations with the Bolsheviks. Only J. L. Garvin, Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, and Lord Robert Cecil preceived the shortcomings of a Russo-British cold war. In fact, most Tories intensified their opposition to anything approaching Prinkipo as their support for the Whites waned.[134]

Many Tory newspapers and politicians may have secretly desired an Allied invasion to root out the Bolsheviks after the Armistice. With but a few exceptions, they

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[132] Ibid., cols. 1607-8, 1617-20.

[133] Ibid., cols. 1625-37.

[134] For two salient examples, see George Buchanan's speech and Henry Page Croft's article in The Russian Outlook, I (Oct. 11, 1919), 539-40, and (Nov. 8, 1919), 638.

also sensed the impossibility of such a venture. They committed themselves to the White cause in the spring of 1919, but their enthusiasm dissipated when the Whites met defeat. But Tory papers and backbenchers certainly limited the government's options on Russia. As Lloyd George discovered during the Bullitt incident, he could not attempt to end the conflict without threatening his own position.

The government's inconsistent and even contradictory policies toward Russia during this year compound the difficulty of gauging the response of Tory ministers. Historians generally have oversimplified their opinions on intervention by labelling them as supporters of either Lloyd George or Churchill.[135] Some ministers, like Curzon and Cecil, vacillated between policies of greater or lesser British assistance. Too little is known of the views of Lord Birkenhead, the Geddes brothers, and Sir Robert Horne to categorize them. Balfour, Austen Chamberlain, and Bonar Law apparently opposed large-scale intervention throughout. Despite the divisions, it seems clear that Churchill found little support from his Tory Cabinet colleagues. Moreover, the War Secretary was not highly regarded by Tory leaders. Law especially disliked and distrusted him: during one

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[135] F. S. Northedge, The Troubled Giant: Britain Among the Great Powers, 1916-1939 (New York, 1966), p. 76, is a good example.

Cabinet discussion on Russia the Tory leader remarked, "We have heard quite enough of Winston's nonsense."[136]

Tory ministers regarded the Bolsheviks as a band of criminal usurpers who betrayed the Allies during a dark moment. However, they did not desire a return of Russian autocracy because it would have resurrected old fears of Russian expansion.[137] Some historians claim that Tories backed intervention to eliminate the Russian threat forever by dismembering the country.[138] Admittedly, they supported independence for the Baltic states, and some hoped to keep the Caucasus from Bolshevik control.[139] Not once, however, did the Cabinet consider the future boundaries of Russia.[140] Britain's failure to evolve a coherent Russian policy was costly. When Lloyd George finally attempted to establish such a policy, he met with stubborn Tory resistance.

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[136] Robert Rhodes James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative: J. C. C. Davidson's Memoirs and Papers, 1910-1937 (London, 1969), p. 53.

[137] A number of Tories commented on this; see Law to Lloyd George, May 20, 1919, Bonar Law Papers, 101/3/78, and a memorandum by Balfour, July 16, 1918, cited by Konni Zilliacus, Mirror of the Past: a History of Secret Diplomacy (New York, 1946), p. 269.

[138] E.g., Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, p. 19. For an opposing view, see Bradley, Allied Intervention in Russia, p. 13.

[139] Balfour, and especially Curzon, wanted the Caucasus kept from the Soviets, but Cecil opposed them; see Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, pp. 70-86.

[140] Ibid., p. 220.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRADE AGREEMENT

The Guildhall Speech

During a major foreign policy address at the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet on November 8, 1919, Lloyd George emphasized that peace would remain illusory while the Russian conflict continued. Britain already had repaid her "debt of honour" to the Whites with £100 million of supplies and armaments. Troubled by the prospect of an interminable guerrilla war, the Prime Minister believed another Prinkipo plan might restore peace.[1]

Conservative papers criticized the Prime Minister. The Times claimed his advocacy of "neutrality between right and wrong" would "cause the British name to stink." The Daily Mail denounced his suggestion of "shaking hands with murder." It printed a cartoon showing him dancing with Trotsky toward a sign entitled "Back to Prinkipo"; the caption read, "The Prinkipo Prance or Foxy Trotsky." Almost alone, the Daily Telegraph avoided polemics.[2]

The Times' lobby correspondent reported that many

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[1] Observer, Nov. 9, 1919, p. 13.

[2] The Times, Nov. 10, 1919, p. 15; Daily Mail, Nov. 10, p. 8, Nov. 11, 1919, p. 8; Daily Telegraph, Nov. 10, 1919, p. 10. See also Morning Post, Nov. 10, 1919, p. 8.

Unionist M.P.'s were "uneasy and upset."[3] In Commons Samuel Hoare asked if the speech signalled a change of policy. Bonar Law replied that it was an expression of hope and concern.[4] Law's answer lacked force. In fact, the Prime Minister had spoken without first consulting the Cabinet. The Daily Mail stated that several ministers would resign if Britain negotiated with the Bolsheviks.[5]

The strong Tory response apparently prompted the Prime Minister to "clarify" his statement. A number of Tory backbenchers who had never spoken on Russia gave advance notices of questions for the November 13 session. That morning Lloyd George drew up a general statement, with help from Law and Balfour.[6] In Commons the Prime Minister gave assurance that British policy was unchanged. However, he reaffirmed the government's desire to bring peace to Russia because the conflict was impoverishing Britain and the world.[7] Many Conservative papers were dubious about this ambiguous statement, but the Daily Telegraph, convinced of Lloyd George's sincerity, accused them of

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[3]The Times, Nov. 12, 1919, p. 14.

[4]Debates, CXXI (Nov. 10, 1919), col. 15.

[5]Daily Mail, Nov. 11, 1919, p. 7.

[6]Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, p. 308.

[7]Debates, CXXI (Nov. 13, 1919), cols. 471-75.

overreacting.[8]

On November 17 Russia was discussed at length in Commons. Three distinct viewpoints expressed by Tory speakers indicated widening differences of opinion. Lord Robert Cecil again urged Britain to work for peace because it would benefit her economy; and Denikin's territory contained a huge grain surplus which could alleviate famine elsewhere in Europe. Apparently to show that he was not pro-Bolshevik, Cecil concluded by denouncing their crimes.[9] Walter Guinness and Henry Page Croft claimed the Soviets did not want peace. "You can no more expect Bolshevism to live within its boundaries," said Guinness, "than expect a man-eating tiger to live in a stall and feed on carrots." Although reluctantly accepting the expiration of aid to the Whites, Guinness asserted that a loan to them would be a "perfectly good debt." Both speakers prophesied German domination of Russia if Britain pulled out.[10] Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland advocated a middle policy, stressing the need for peace but disavowing negotiations; and he sought only moral support for the Whites. Although not wishing to antagonize "the Russia of the future," his approach

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[8]Daily Telegraph, Nov. 11, 1919, p. 10. For an opposing view, see Daily Mail, Nov. 14, 1919, p. 6.

[9]Debates, CXXI (Nov. 17, 1919), cols. 688-97.

[10]Ibid., cols. 726-32, 751-58.

probably would have guaranteed it.[11] In this respect, Lloyd George was close to Steel-Maitland.

Instead of analyzing his policy as was expected, Lloyd George merely rehashed his November 13 statement.[12] Guinness and Page Croft expressed amazement at his avoidance of the issue.[13] Balfour's attempt to "clarify" Lloyd George's speech also obscured the government's intentions.[14] The Times called the Prime Minister's statement one of the worst defenses of foreign policy in decades. The Morning Post stated, "There are times when it is wiser to refrain [from comment]--in case a perhaps natural emotion might carry the pen too far."[15]

Lloyd George may have intended the Guildhall speech to be simply an expression of concern for Russia. But it was probably a trial balloon to test Tory reaction to the idea of direct political negotiations with the Bolsheviks. If this was the case, he certainly retreated in the face of Tory criticisms. Perhaps he interpreted their weakening

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[11] Ibid., cols. 710-15.

[12] Ibid., cols. 715-26.

[13] Ibid., cols. 726-27, 752.

[14] Ibid., cols. 765-67.

[15] The Times, Nov. 18, 1919, p. 14; Morning Post, Nov. 18, 1919, p. 6. See also Saturday Review, CXXVIII (Nov. 15, 1919), 454; National Review, LXXIV (December, 1919), 440-48; and Daily Mail, Nov. 18, 1919, p. 6.

endorsement of the Whites in the fall to mean they would tolerate a revival of Prinkipo. With but a few exceptions, they had not changed. In fact, the Guildhall speech and the statements of November 13 and 17 led many Tory newspapers and politicians to espouse the White cause through the remainder of the year. Perhaps to discredit the Bolsheviks further, some papers increased coverage of their alleged excesses and encouragement of universal revolution.[16] However, two respected Conservative journals dissented.

On November 22 the Spectator declared that the Allies should promote an armistice because the Reds would come to agreeable terms. After all, they would be overthrown anyway when the populace contrasted their anarchical rule to Denikin's progressive governing of South Russia.[17] The Observer went even further. On November 16 Garvin acknowledged the "disastrous failure" of intervention: having fought with "magnificent ability," the Bolsheviks soon would oust the Whites. Thus a totally new approach was necessary. Trusting that "an increasing majority of sane Unionism" would accept this reality, Garvin advocated direct British-Bolshevik negotiations. The Soviets would accept "reasonable"

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[16]The Times, Nov. 14, pp. 13-14, Dec. 10, 1919, p. 15; Daily Mail, Nov. 17, 1919, p. 10; Daily Telegraph, Nov. 18, 1919, p. 10.

[17]Spectator, CXXIII (Nov. 22, 1919), 683-84.

terms and then could be accorded diplomatic recognition. He predicted success because Soviet policies already were "profoundly modified."[18] In this editorial Garvin outlined the basic tenets later held by all Tory "conciliators" and established himself as the leading spokesman of that segment of Tory opinions. Significantly, Lloyd George's thoughts on Russian policy evolved on similar lines.

The Opening of Trade Negotiations

After the Peace Conference the Allies did not attempt to coordinate their Russian policies until the Whites had failed. In December they terminated all assistance to the Whites but established a cordon sanitaire around Russia by supplying armaments to contiguous states.[19] The Cabinet endorsed the decision, with only Churchill objecting.[20] Several weeks later, as a result of Denikin's continuing retreat, the anti-Bolshevik Caucasian republics

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[18] Observer, Nov. 16, 1919, pp. 12-13.

[19] Secretary's Notes of a Conference, Dec. 12, Dec. 13, 1919, British Documents, ser. 1, II (London, 1948), pp. 744-48, 764-65, 774-78. Although Hoare and his Group continued to press strongly for at least minimal assistance to the Whites, he admitted privately, "We shall probably be unsuccessful in our efforts." Significantly, he endorsed the idea of a cordon sanitaire a week before the Allied meeting; see Hoare to Dr. Harold Williams (British journalist in South Russia), Dec. 4, 1919, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 3.

[20] Cabinet minutes, Dec. 12, 1919, cited by Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, p. 316.

of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan seemed about to be overrun by the Soviets. The crisis unexpectedly dominated the discussion at a routine meeting of the Allied Supreme Council held in Paris on January 10, 1920. The Council quickly accepted Curzon's proposal for de facto recognition of Georgia and Azerbaijan, but his request for arms shipments was tabled for further study.[21]

To coordinate British policy Lloyd George sent for Law, Balfour, Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty Walter Long, and the military chiefs. This group met three times between January 16 and 19. Curzon and Long wanted Allied troops sent to the Caucasus to protect the British-dominated oil fields in southern Persia and to defend the approaches to India. Churchill thought the republics were doomed in any event. To relieve pressure in the South he suggested that the Allies should incite Poland and Finland to attack in the North. Lloyd George disparaged a military threat to Persia and India; and because Britain could not spare troops, he would send only armaments.[22] Curzon and Churchill spoke to Allied leaders on January 19, but the Prime Minister's recommendation was accepted.[23]

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[21]Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Jan. 10, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, II, 796-97.

[22]Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, pp. 331-36.

[23]Minutes of a meeting of the Allied Supreme Council, Jan. 19, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, II, 914-25.

In the meantime, Conservatives reacted strongly to the Bolshevik advance. The Times feared a thrust beyond Transcaucasia. The Daily Telegraph likened them to the "Mongol hordes" who had devoured everything in their path. The Saturday Review called for volunteer armies to crush the Soviets. Only the Observer and the Spectator believed the Red Army would stop voluntarily at the old Russian frontier.[24]

The government fueled Tory fears. Speaking before a large Coalition demonstration, Winston Churchill vividly described the alleged threat to the Empire.[25] A War Office statement of January 16 warned that Britain would be forced to commit troops to the Caucasus to seal off the Bolshevik peril. At the same time, it was revealed that a ministerial delegation had been summoned hastily to Paris.[26] Tory papers became apprehensive. The Morning Post felt hostilities could be avoided only if Denikin's forces were re-

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Although some assistance reached the Caucasus, the Red Army occupied Azerbaijan in April, 1920, Armenia in November, 1920, and Georgia in March, 1921.

[24]The Times, Jan. 3, 1920, p. 11; Daily Telegraph, Jan. 6, 1920, p. 10; Saturday Review, CXXIX (Jan. 10, 1920), 26; Observer, Jan 4, 1920, p. 12; Spectator, CXXIV (Jan. 10, 1920), 37.

[25]Observer, Jan. 4, 1920, p. 14.

[26]Churchill later denied any involvement in preparing or issuing the statement; see Ullman, Britain and the Russian Civil War, p. 328.

supplied.[27] As tensions peaked, the Allies announced on January 18 that they would negotiate a trade agreement with the Bolsheviks.

This startling disclosure was almost entirely the work of Lloyd George. Several factors influenced him. Before the war England and Russia had traded extensively. Britain's brief postwar boom had collapsed by late 1919, and Anglo-Russian trade might help to revive the economy.[28] The Soviets often asked for commercial relations with the West.[29] And European liberals stressed repeatedly that trade would mollify the Bolsheviks.[30]

On January 6, 1920 E. F. Wise, an economic adviser attached to the British Peace Delegation, had requested that Britain end the blockade and resume trade through the Russian Co-operative Societies, which had remained free from Soviet domination.[31] Lloyd George endorsed the idea but did not inform the Cabinet. Despite the pressing

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[27]Morning Post, Jan. 16, 1920, p. 6. See also Daily Telegraph, Jan. 17, 1920, p. 10.

[28]Keith Hutchinson, The Decline and Fall of British Capitalism (New York, 1950), pp. 161-86, examines the condition of the British economy at this time.

[29]Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, III, 148-55.

[30]Thompson, Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace, p. 357.

[31]Memorandum by Wise, Jan. 6, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, II, 867-70, n. 1.

Caucasus development, he presented his proposal to the Allies in Paris. On January 14 he introduced two anti-Soviet representatives of the Co-operative Societies, who claimed that Russia possessed abundant exportable products and gave assurances that Bolshevism would be dealt a crippling blow if trade was reopened.[32] On January 18 the Allies decided to initiate trade but insisted that "these arrangements imply no change in the policy . . . towards the Soviet Government."[33] This announcement, too, was made without prior Cabinet approval; even the Foreign Office was not represented at the discussions.[34] The Allies' conduct at Paris typified their inconsistency: they mapped military strategy against the Bolsheviks while extending the hand of friendship. If Lloyd George was not troubled by the paradox, some Tories were.

Tory press reaction to the announcement varied. The Morning Post cried that the proposal to trade with "the devil" would incense decent people; besides, Russia had no exports. The Times characterized the move as "fraudulent" and denounced Lloyd George for surrendering to "advanced"

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[32]Minutes of a meeting of the Heads of the Delegation, Jan. 14, 1920, Ibid., pp. 867-75.

[33]Ibid., p. 912.

[34]Lloyd George later explained that the Foreign Office was excluded because the matter came under the supervision of the Food Ministry; see Ibid., p. 911, n. 5.

Labourites. It stated--mistakenly--that the Russian Co-operatives were controlled by the Bolsheviks.[35] The commercial community also was not pleased.[36]

Some Conservative journals, however, offered strong support. The English Review suggested that Russia could save the starving millions in Europe. The Spectator called the decision "sound" even though "trade with the Co-operative Societies will be trade with the Bolsheviks." It urged Britain to "coax back Russian life to normal by trade, and to leave Russian politics to look after themselves." The Observer hoped trade would build a "solid peace" with Russia. Even the Saturday Review abandoned its earlier hawkish stand.[37]

In view of the prevailing war scare over the Caucasus, the number of favorable Tory press comments is surprising. In part it may have been an emotional release following recent tensions. The prospect of eliminating the Bolsheviks peacefully certainly made the trade proposal attractive, and the absence of direct contacts added appeal.

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[35] Morning Post, Jan. 17, p. 6, Jan. 19, 1920, p. 6; The Times, Jan. 19, 1920, p. 13.

[36] The Times, Jan. 29, 1920, p.14.

[37] English Review, XXX (February, 1920), 172-75; Spectator, CXXIV (Jan. 24, 1920), 101-2; Observer, Jan. 18, 1920, p. 10; Saturday Review, CXXIX (Jan. 24, 1920), 74. The Daily Telegraph, Jan. 21, 1920, p. 10, also did not criticize the move.

When addressing the newly convened session of parliament on February 10, Lloyd George emphasized that the exhausted Red Army no longer threatened the West. But he also objected to peace negotiations until the Soviets replaced their "methods of barbarism" with a "civilized" government. Russia and Europe needed each other economically. His reports indicated that "the corn bins of Russia are bulging with grain." He concluded: "Trade, in my opinion, will bring an end to the ferocity, the rapine, and the crudities of Bolshevism surer than any other method."[38]

Tory backbenchers did not respond. During the next few days most Tory speakers deplored the staggering cost of intervention.[39] Lord Robert Cecil, however, argued for direct trade relations if Britain was to have any influence in Russia.[40] The Morning Post could not understand why Conservative M.P.'s appeared so "complaisant."[41]

This observation underscored a decline of Tory interest in Russia, the first since the World War. The change was not dramatic. The press, for example, still printed accounts of alleged Soviet crimes.[42] And in March

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[38] Debates, CXXV (Feb. 10, 1920), cols. 40-46.

[39] Ibid., CXXV (Feb. 12, 1920), col. 333, and CXXV (Feb. 13, 1920), cols. 400, 438.

[40] Ibid., CXXV (Feb. 12, 1920), cols. 281-86.

[41] Morning Post, Feb. 11, 1920, p. 6.

[42] E.g., The Times, March 31, p. 15, May 24, 1920, p. 9.

The Times listed over twenty-five extant anti-Bolshevik organizations, some with alluring titles like the Liberty League and the Christian Counter-Bolshevik Crusade.[43] However, Tory editorial writers and backbenchers began to ignore the Russian issue. Samuel Hoare now corresponded infrequently with White leaders.[44] Humanitarian projects appeared. Hoare, Oliver Locker-Lampson, and others were taken up with the South Russia Relief Fund, founded in December, 1919 to assist White refugees.[45] Few Tories were moved by General Denikin's visit to London in April, 1920. Hoare and Guinness led a handful of M.P.'s attending dinner in his honor.[46] Churchill wanted Denikin treated as a government guest, but Bonar Law said it was "absolutely out of the question."[47]

Changing developments in Russia perhaps influenced

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[43] Ibid., March 13, 1920, p. 12. Reports of their activities can be found in The Times, Jan. 28, p. 9, Feb. 12, p. 10, Feb. 14, p. 14, Feb. 18, p. 13, March 3, 1920, p. 12, and Saturday Review, CXXIX (Feb. 14, 1920), 161-62.

[44] E.g., Hoare to E. Sabline (Tsarist diplomat), May 21, 1920, and Hoare to Struve, July 16, 1920, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 4.

[45] The Times, Dec. 22, 1919, p. 8. On March 1, 1920, p. 10, The Times reported that the Committee had collected over £40,000.

[46] Ibid., April 28, 1920, p. 17.

[47] Law to Churchill, April 16, 1920, Bonar Law Papers, 101/4/32.

the Tories. On February 2 the Soviets signed a peace treaty with Estonia, their first postwar agreement with a bourgeois government, and negotiations soon were started with other nations. A number of domestic reforms softened the impact of their rule.[48] But this hiatus did not last long: as was to happen so often during the 1920's, new developments refocused the Tories' attention on Russia.

By the time trade negotiations began in late May, many Tories had voiced strong opposition. Two factors probably explain this change from their initially mild response. First, the Soviets had, in the meantime, taken over the Co-operative Societies. Because of the Bolshevik monopoly on foreign trade, it meant that the Allies would be trading directly with the Soviet government.[49] But Allied leaders did not object.[50] Tory ministers also seemed unperturbed. After being asked repeatedly by Conservative M.P.'s about the status of the Co-operatives and their delegates to the upcoming conference, Bonar Law finally answered: "It is known that the co-operative societies are under the control of the Soviet Government. It is in the

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[48]Deutscher, The Prophet Armed, pp. 458-59.

[49]Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, II (New York, 1952), pp. 237-40.

[50]Appendix to British Secretary's Notes of an Allied Conference, Feb. 23, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VII (London, 1958), p. 216.

interest of this country as well as of Russia to get trade established."[51] Secondly, Allied policy had devolved into a British enterprise after France and Italy declined to participate.[52] In essence, the long-standing Tory fear of direct Anglo-Soviet negotiations seemed about to materialize.

Most Tory newspapers used identical arguments against the talks: the Co-operatives' delegates really were Soviet agents who only wanted political recognition; the Bolsheviks had stripped Russia completely of exportable goods; and it was wrong for Britain to sit down with bloodstained criminals.[53] The Daily Mail, the National Review, and The Times were outraged by the absence of protests from Tory ministers. The latter paper warned that Conservatives would find it difficult to forgive their leaders for "soiling their ermine through intercourse with the emissaries of Lenin."[54]

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[51] Debates, CXXVIII (April 27, 1920), cols. 1013-14.

[52] British Documents, ser. 1, VIII (London, 1958), p. 280. For a summary of French objections, see Curzon to Lloyd George, May 28, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, XII (London, 1962), pp. 726-28.

[53] The Times, May 28, 1920, p. 13; Morning Post, May 26, 1920, p. 6; Daily Mail, May 28, 1920, p. 4; Daily Telegraph, May 31, 1920, p. 12; Saturday Review, CXXIX (May 29, 1920), 491. Only the Observer and the Spectator continued to support the government; see especially the telling argument by the diplomatic correspondent for the Observer, May 30, 1920, p. 13.

[54] Daily Mail, May 29, 1920, p. 4; National Review, LXXV (July, 1920), 577; The Times, May 24, 1920, p. 9.

Indeed, Conservative ministers were not disturbed by the prospect of "shaking hands with murder." The Cabinet did not deal with the conference until May 28, in itself a striking indication of their acquiescence. The Cabinet discussion centered on a note by Curzon, who felt the trade talks provided an opportunity to settle other outstanding issues. His reasoning was simple:

> We know from a great variety of sources that the Russian Government is threatened with complete economic disaster, and that it is ready to pay almost any price for the assistance which we more than any one else are in a position to give. We can hardly contemplate coming to its rescue without exacting our own price for it, and it seems to me that that price can far better be paid in a cessation of Bolshevik hostility in parts of the world of importance to us, than in the ostensible interchange of commodities, the existence of which on any considerable scale in Russia there is grave reason to doubt.

Specifically, he hoped to repatriate certain British prisoners still in Russia, secure a cessation of Bolshevik propaganda in Persia and Afghanistan, and arrange an armistice for the embattled Whites.[55] His colleagues agreed unanimously to these proposals.[56]

The two conference delegations were headed by

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[55] Note by Curzon, May 27, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, XII, 723-26. A month later Curzon wrote that the resumption of trade also would "lead more quickly than anything else to the downfall of the communist regime"; see Curzon to Sir Auckland Geddes (ambassador to the United States), June 24, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, XII, 742.

[56] Cabinet minutes, May 28, 1920, CAB 23/21.

Leonid Krassin and Tory Sir Robert Horne, President of the Board of Trade. At the opening session on May 31, Krassin said he was empowered to discuss the Allied blockade of Russia, currency, commercial representation, and the legal basis for trade. Lloyd George, who was to participate frequently, countered with Curzon's suggestions.[57] During a second conference on June 7, Lloyd George also asked for recognition of Britons' claims for unpaid services and goods supplied to the Tsarist and to the Soviet governments. The talks then adjourned until June 29.[58]

Fearing that Lloyd George would offer diplomatic recognition, many Tory papers editorialized on the conference almost daily. Several were piqued by the government's silence.[59] In fact, there had been no public statement since the Prime Minister's speech of February 10. The Times predicted an imminent Bolshevik collapse and printed many letters from Conservative backbenchers who denounced not only the Bolsheviks but also Lloyd George for his allegedly

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[57]Secretary's Notes of a Conference, May 31, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 281-92.

[58]Secretary's Notes of a Conference, June 7, 1920, Ibid., pp. 292-306.

[59]Representative editorials can be found in The Times, June 4, 1920, p. 17; Daily Mail, June 1, 1920, p. 6; Morning Post, June 1, 1920, p. 6; and Daily Telegraph, June 1, 1920, p. 12.

devious methods.[60] A few Tory journals continued to support the government. Despite occasional attacks from other Tory papers, the Observer pressed strongly for a political settlement.[61] Although the Spectator now conceded that Russia probably did not have any exports, it still desired trade relations. Time and Tide, a new independent Tory magazine for women, reasoned that the "infectious Bolshevik apple" would not spoil Britain.[62]

In Commons on June 7 Tory backbenchers finally spoke out. John Gretton hurled abuse at the Soviet delegation. Reginald Hall was astonished that Britain was negotiating with the government which had not apologized for the murder of Captain Cromie. Like other distraught colleagues, he explained that the Bolsheviks planned to barter gold stolen from foreigners, museums, and churches. Samuel Hoare offered a more reasoned analysis. Although favoring commercial ties because Europe needed peace and food, he predicted that mutual "hostility" would undermine the talks.[63]

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[60] The Times, June 9, p. 12, June 12, p. 12, June 18, p. 12, June 28, p. 15, July 20, 1920, p. 8.

[61] For an attack on the Observer, see Saturday Review, CXXIX (June 12, 1920), 534.

[62] Spectator, CXXIV (June 12, 1920), 780-81; Time and Tide, I (June 4, 1920), 76.

[63] For these speeches, see Debates, CXXX (June 7, 1920), cols. 147-53, 154-56, 159-64.

In reply Lloyd George admitted that Britain was now dealing directly with the Bolsheviks, but he dismissed Tory objections. After all, Russia had a grain surplus, "The mere fact that Central Russia is starving is not proof at all that there is not plenty in other parts." Moreover, Britain would violate traditional policy if she refused to trade because of Bolshevik excesses, "This country has opened up most of the cannibal trade of the world." He concluded that world peace was contingent upon peace in Russia.[64]

Some Tory backbenchers were not reassured.[65] In a letter to Horne two days later, Hoare ruled out "a permanent Chinese Wall" against the Bolsheviks, but he foresaw two "disastrous" results of Lloyd George's policy. Britain gave France the impression that "perfide Albion having sacrificed its anti-Bolshevik principles is merely interested in pinching the Russian market." And recent talks with representatives of the Baltic States convinced him the Soviets became "more truculent and agressive [sic] when accorded recognition." Hoare was intrigued by the motivations behind the Conference:

> You and the Prime Minister are entering upon these negotiations with the arrière pensée that by re-

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[64] Ibid., cols. 164-72.

[65] E.g., the statements by Archer-Shee and Page Croft in Ibid., cols. 174-78, 182-87.

> establishing normal life in Russia you will be destroying the Bolshevik Government, whilst the Bolshevik Government are frankly declaring that they regard the resumption of trade relations as a means for Bolshevik propaganda and for bringing nearer the day of world revolution which will destroy the British capitalist Government. How can any official agreement be stable when this is the mentality of the two contracting parties?

Like Curzon, he hoped Britain would force the Soviets into a political settlement; but his plan would include "a free opportunity for public opinion to express itself in Russia."[66]

Most Tory journals were wary of the Prime Minister's statement.[67] Even the Spectator believed that his admission of direct dealings with the Soviets exemplified the government's uncertain policy. It finally offered reluctant support: "Thus, although M. Lloyd George's policy for this week appears, granting his facts to be correct, to be reasonable, sad experience prevents us from assuming that he will be of the same mind next week." But diplomatic recognition should be withheld "until Lenin confines his sinister activities to his country."[68]

Meeting for the first time since 1913, the Conference of the National Unionist Association offered dissident Conservatives a platform to denounce the Soviets. More than

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[66]Hoare to Horne, June 9, 1920, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 4.

[67]E.g., Morning Post, June 8, 1920, p. 6.

[68]Spectator, CXXIV (June 12, 1920), 780.

half of the constituency association resolutions dealt with Bolshevism and socialism.[69] The Annual Report of the Executive Committee blasted the Soviets for trying "to overthrow modern civilisation."[70] Party leader Bonar Law defended the government. Much of his plea echoed the Prime Minister's proposals.[71] Even these revelations did not satisfy some delegates. Lord Salisbury and L. J. Maxse, editor of the National Review, charged that the government was planning to grant diplomatic recognition.[72]

Tory arguments against the trade talks were substantiated by several repatriated prisoners from Russia. H. V. Keeling told a group of M.P.'s that Russia was starving and on the verge of collapse.[73] Reverend Frank W. North, the Anglican chaplain in Moscow, was received at Buckingham Palace and was feted at several receptions where prominent Conservatives shared the podium.[74] In press articles North also predicted that the Soviets would fall if

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[69]London, Conservative party Archives, Conservative Conference Minutes, 1920, pp. 21, 22, 40; The Times, June 10, 1920, p. 18.

[70]Conservative Conference Minutes, 1920, p. 12.

[71]Ibid., p. 29.

[72]Ibid., p. 16; The Times, June 12, 1920, p. 18.

[73]The Russian Outlook, III (July 17, 1920), 1491.

[74]The Times, May 31, p.14, June 14, p. 16, June 24, 1920, p. 13.

Britain refused to trade. Tories often pointed to his statements to buttress their own opposition.[75]

When negotiations reconvened on June 29, the two sides were unable to reach agreement on Soviet policy in the Middle East, their propaganda in Britain, and debts owed to Britons.[76] Krassin seemed willing to bargain on propaganda. But he claimed that Soviet foreign policy was outside his jurisdiction and that the Allied intervention and blockade had relieved the Soviets of responsibility for Tsarist debts. Moreover, debt recognition was not needed to restore British confidence, as Lloyd George had argued, because businessmen were anxious to recover past losses. Krassin finally offered to settle outstanding differences in

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[75] Daily Mail, June 2, 1920, p. 7; The Russian Outlook, III (June 5, 1920), 1360.

[76] Soviet Russia's total indebtedness to Britain has never been established clearly; there are also differing figures for the various classes of debts. The following breakdown is based on statements by A. V. Alexander (parliamentary secretary to the Board of Trade) in Debates, CLXXV (July 7, 1924), col. 1756, and Lord Curzon in Lords Debates, LVI (March 26, 1924), col. 1066. Russia's private debts (excluding interest) totaled approximately £ 255 million: confiscated property in Russia owned by British nationals, £ 180 million; Tsarist bonds owned by Britons, £ 40 million; and miscellaneous private debts (including personal possessions, personal injury, etc.), £ 35 million. Russia's public indebtedness to Britain (including interest as of 1924) was approximately £ 807 million: prewar loans to the Tsarist government, £ 167 million; and war loans, £ 640 million. Thus the sum total of Russia's indebtedness to Britain was approximately £ 1062 million.

a "complete unconditional and general peace" with the West.[77] Lloyd George refused, demanding Soviet compliance with Britain's terms within a week.[78]

The British ultimatum contained an ambiguous sentence: "The British Government propose what is tantamount to a general armistice, as the condition of the resumption of trade relations, in the hope that this armistice may lead ere long to a general peace."[79] Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin apparently interpreted this to mean the Allies would grant de jure recognition. On July 7 he wired acceptance of the principles in the note.[80] But he had read too much into it. Curzon had written previously, "There is no question whatever of making peace with the Soviet Government, or of according them de jure recognition."[81] And the other Allies, especially France, would not negotiate with

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[77]Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, III, 158-62, explains the Soviet stand in detail.

[78]Secretary's Notes of a Conference with the Russian Trade Delegation, June 29, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1., VIII, 380-88.

[79]The Times, July 15, 1920, p. 9; Michael Glenny, "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, March, 1921," Journal of Contemporary History, V, No. 2 (1970), 70.

[80]Narkomindel [Soviet Foreign Ministry] Statement on Anglo-Russian Relations, July 9, 1920, Jane Degras, ed., Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol. I: 1917-1924 (New York, 1951), pp. 191-94. (Hereinafter referred to as Soviet Documents.)

[81]Curzon to Auckland Geddes, June 24, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, XII, 742.

the Soviets.[82] At this point the trade talks were suspended because a more pressing matter came to a head.

- The Russo-Polish War

When the Polish army invaded the Ukraine on April 25, 1920, many Conservative papers exonerated the aggressors. The Times claimed the Poles simply had anticipated a Soviet attack, "It has been a defensive offensive." Some Tory journals hailed the Poles as defenders of Western civilization.[83] The Observer alone dissented, Garvin remarking prophetically, "Those who countenance the wild Polish ambitions and aggressions know not what they do."[84] One Tory backbencher agreed with Garvin. Lord Robert Cecil, who had since become chairman of the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union, asked the government to secure a League of Nations condemnation of Poland. Lord Curzon replied that the Red Army had been massed on the Polish frontier. If the League interfered, it "would certainly be regarded as intervention in favour of the Bolshevists

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[82] Sir Eyre Crowe (Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office) to the Italian chargé d'affaires, June 2, 1920, Ibid., p. 743.

[83] The Times, May 19, 1920, p. 17; Spectator, CXXIV (June 12, 1920), 780; Daily Mail, May 21, 1920, p. 4; Daily Telegraph, July 22, 1920, p. 10.

[84] Observer, May 23, 1920, p. 10.

and against our Allies." Moreover, the Soviets did not recognize the League. However, he conceded that Poland had acted without first consulting Britain.[85]

Disturbed by Labour's claim that Britain had engineered the attack, Bonar Law repeated Curzon's disclaimer on May 20. He stressed Britain's neutrality but admitted that she would supply Poland with armaments promised in the fall of 1919.[86] Several Tory backbenchers supported the government: Halford Mackinder asked the public to show "some friendliness towards the Poles in the very difficult position in which they find themselves."[87]

In fact, the Poles advanced steadily until late June when a Soviet counterattack forced them into a costly retreat. Marshal Pilsudski then sent his Prime Minister, M. Grabski, to Spa for Allied help. Lloyd George criticized the Poles. But, fearing a Bolshevik victory, the Allies formulated an armistice and pledged to defend Poland if the Soviets crossed the provisional border (the Curzon line) fixed by the Peace Conference on December 8, 1919. Grabski agreed to the terms, and on July 11 Curzon dispatched

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[85]For extracts and commentary on the correspondence, see Coates, Armed Intervention in Russia, pp. 321-22, and The Russian Outlook, III (May 22, 1920), 1295.

[86]Debates, CXXIX (May 20, 1920), cols. 1696-1704.

[87]Ibid., cols. 1711-18. See also Walter Guinness' remarks, cols. 1660-64.

them to Russia.[88] Tory papers backed the Allies.[89] The Soviet reply vaguely consented to peace talks if Poland made direct representations.[90] In Commons on July 21 Lloyd George called the Polish attack "reckless and foolish" but added that a vanquished Poland would be a disaster for European stability.[91] Tory backbenchers and the press applauded his analysis: all now favored a peaceful solution.[92]

In replying to the Soviet note Curzon accepted direct Russo-Polish negotiations but emphasized the Allies' desire to meet concurrently with a Russian delegation in London. In concluding he warned them not to cross the Curzon line.[93] But the Soviets were convinced that Polish Communists and the Red Army could topple Pilsudski. As a subterfuge Russia met the Poles on August 1, after her

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[88]For the Allied discussions, see Notes of a Meeting, July 6, July 9, 1920, and British Secretary's Notes of a Conversation, July 10, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 441-42, 502-6, 524-30. The Curzon note is reprinted in Debates, CXXXI (July 14, 1920), cols. 2372-74.

[89]E.g., Observer, July 18, 1920, p. 10, and The Times, July 13, 1920, p. 17.

[90]Soviet Documents, I, 194-97.

[91]Debates, CXXXII (July 21, 1920), cols. 481-86, 539-41.

[92]Ibid., cols. 517-21, 529-30; Observer, July 25, 1920, p. 10; Daily Telegraph, July 20, 1920, p. 10.

[93]Curzon to Chicherin, July 20, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 649-50.

advancing forces already had crossed the Curzon line.[94] They also agreed to talks in London.[95] Led by Kamenev and Krassin, the Soviet Trade Delegation (renamed the Peace Delegation) met with Lloyd George and other ministers on August 4 and 6. Flushed with hopes of imminent victory, the Soviets demanded excessive terms. Lloyd George refused and demanded an armistice to begin on August 10. If Russia demurred he would supply Poland through Danzig and reimpose the Baltic blockade.[96]

With the Red Army barely forty miles from Warsaw, the Cabinet unanimously seconded the Prime Minister's effort to keep Poland free.[97] Only Winston Churchill offered an alternative. In the Evening News on July 29 he proposed committing German troops to stem the Red tide, but The Times criticized his suggestion.[98] Now extremely apprehensive,

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[94] Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, III, 209-10.

[95] Chicherin to Curzon, July 24, 1920, extracts printed in Debates, CXXXII (July 26, 1920), cols. 974-75.

[96] Draft Notes of a Conference, and Appendices, Aug. 4, Aug. 6, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 670-708. Sir William Bull, a noted anti-Bolshevik Tory backbencher, participated in the August 6 meeting at the request of his old friend Krassin; information provided by Michael Glenny, interview in London, July 25, 1969.

[97] See Lloyd George's remarks in British Secretary's Notes of a Conference, July 27, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 652.

[98] The Times, July 29, 1920, pp. 11, 13.

The Times expressed a view shared by many Tory papers: "It is a terrible truth that once more we stand upon the edge of a crisis fraught with possibilities only less tragic than those that lowered over us in this first week of August six years ago."[99] Editorials reflected a fear that a communized Poland would prompt the Russians and Germans to demand a fundamental revision of the Versailles treaty. Western civilization was felt to hang in the balance.[100] Despite such dark prophecies no Tory journal wanted to commit British troops. The Daily Mail felt the arrest of the Soviet Peace Delegation might bring Russia to heel. Even the Morning Post repudiated war. These papers advocated intervention if Poland fell, but none proposed crossing the Russian frontier.[101] The Observer seemed to rule out British interference completely: Garvin judged that a Soviet occupation of Warsaw would not threaten Polish independence. The Saturday Review also urged the Poles to go it alone.[102]

When the British ultimatum expired, Lloyd George

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[99] Ibid., Aug. 6, 1920, p. 11.

[100] Daily Telegraph, Aug. 5, p. 10, Aug. 9, 1920, p. 10; The Times, Aug. 7, 1920, p. 11.

[101] Daily Mail, Aug. 5, 1920, p. 4; Morning Post, Aug. 10, 1920, p. 6. See also The Times, Aug. 9, 1920, p. 11.

[102] Observer, Aug. 8, 1920, p. 8; Saturday Review, CXXX (Aug. 21, 1920), 149.

outlined the Allies' preparations for parliament.[103] Only two Tory backbenchers responded. Lord Robert Cecil again asked for League mediation, while G. B. Hurst sought support for the Prime Minister.[104] Every Labour speaker cautioned the government not to become involved. After nearly six hours of polemics Lloyd George reappeared with a new set of peace proposals from Kamenev. The demand for immediate Polish demobilization remained, but the Soviets promised to withdraw from the Polish front and to reduce their troop levels. More surprisingly, they would allow the armistice line to be drawn in Poland's favor. After securing Cabinet approval that evening, Lloyd George asked the Poles to accept.[105]

Conservative papers questioned the Soviet terms. The Times called them ambiguous and printed some rumors purporting that the Soviets did not want peace. The Spectator refused comment until the terms were presented at the armistice conference, scheduled to convene momentarily at Minsk.[106] Such hesitations were well-founded. The Minsk

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[103] Debates, CXXXIII (Aug. 10, 1920), cols. 253-72.

[104] Ibid., cols. 287-97, 339-42.

[105] Ibid., cols. 351-54; Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs: a History of the Relations between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, 1917-1929 (2d ed.; Princeton, 1951), I, 267.

[106] The Times, Aug. 11, 1920, p. 11; Spectator, CXXV (Aug. 14, 1920), 196.

talks were never held because neither belligerent wanted peace at the moment. The crisis continued.

After August 10 Tories turned their attention to the Council of Action, a body of trade union and Labour party leaders formed to prevent British intervention.[107] On August 13 an emergency conference of the Labour movement unanimously endorsed the Council of Action. Labour leaders, including such moderates as J. H. Thomas, advocated a general strike.[108] Tory publications were outraged by such proposals. The Morning Post labeled the Council a "London Soviet" taking orders directly from "the Jews in Moscow." The Spectator decided Council leaders were creating a bogus war scare to enhance their political prestige. The Daily Telegraph accused them of attacking a "bogey of their own creation."[109]

Tory backbenchers also concentrated on the domestic ramifications of the crisis. On August 16 Bonar Law, and then Lloyd George, reiterated their peaceful intentions. Law exclaimed that Labour's outburst was "in support of

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[107] For the Council's activities, see L. J. MacFarlane, "Hands off Russia: British Labour and the Russo-Polish War, 1920," Past and Present, No. 28 (1967), 126-52.

[108] Carroll, Soviet Communism and Western Opinion, p. 177.

[109] Morning Post, Aug. 13, 1920, p. 4; Spectator, CXXV (Aug. 14, 1920), 196-97. See also National Review, LXXVI (September, 1920), 5-6, 14-17, and Daily Telegraph, Aug. 16, 1920, p. 8.

our policy."[110] But Lord Robert Cecil stated that the Council's "direct action" was revolutionary. Henry Page Croft insisted that Labour M.P.'s resign for having erected a "Soviet Government which is a rival of this Parliament." Like other Tories he opposed intervention unless the Soviets showed they were "absolutely determined" to crush Poland.[111]

Unknown to Commons, the Poles had counterattacked that morning and almost immediately scattered the Red Army. This "Miracle on the Vistula" benefited Britain as much as Poland. When the Soviets announced their terms for an armistice on August 23, one clause differed from their proposals of August 10. The innocuous "civil militia" to be organized after the war was altered to mean a civil militia of 200,000 men drawn entirely from the working classes. Tory fears had been justified. Lloyd George and Curzon protested Soviet duplicity.[112] The Soviets later withdrew the clause when suing for peace. In March, 1921 the belligerents signed the Treaty of Riga, which gave

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[110] Debates, CXXXIII (Aug. 16, 1920), cols. 663-68, 683-91.

[111] Ibid., cols. 677-83, 707-10.

[112] Notes of a Conversation Held at Lucerne, Aug. 23, 1920, Curzon to Chicherin, Aug. 24, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 777-80, 779, n. 3.

Poland an eastern boundary more favorable than the Curzon line.

Most Conservatives probably hoped the Poles would overrun Russia. But when Poland was threatened, their indecisive reaction perhaps indicated their support was more vocal than substantive. The Tories clearly did not want a military confrontation with Russia. The Council of Action's advocacy of a general strike probably did not influence the government. It did, however, widen the gulf between Labour and the Tories. The war also deepened the mistrust between Britain and Russia: the Soviets were convinced that Britain had instigated hostilities, while the British were outraged by Soviet hypocrisy. As a result, Anglo-Soviet trade negotiations suffered a setback.

The Conclusion of the Agreement

The suspended trade negotiations were not resumed immediately. When the Soviet Peace Delegation returned to Britain in August, they became involved with leftist attempts to prevent Britain from helping the Poles. The government broke the Soviet cipher code and monitored their activities closely.[113] Most Cabinet ministers, including such fervent trade supporters as Law and Horne, wanted the Soviets

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[113] Law to Lord Stamfordham (private secretary to the King), Sept. 15, 1920, Bonar Law Papers, 101/4/88.

dismissed.[114] However, the Cabinet finally allowed them to remain. Bonar Law gave two reasons for the decision: the government would have had to admit possession of private Soviet telegrams, and they believed propaganda could be contained without hindering a resumption of trade.[115] On September 10 Lloyd George denounced the Delegation's machinations.[116] Kamenev left England the next day, and Krassin took his place. On September 14 Lloyd George ordered the civil servant Russian Trade Committee to resume negotiations, but nothing materialized for the next ten weeks.[117]

The impasse resulted from increasing Cabinet dissension. On September 15 Curzon convinced his colleagues to suspend formal talks until the Soviets ceased domestic propaganda and freed the remaining British prisoners in Russia.[118] During the fall Curzon and Chicherin exchanged several recriminating telegrams. The Foreign Secretary criticized the Soviets for violating their propaganda pledge,

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[114] J. C. C. Davidson (private secretary to Bonar Law) to Stamfordham, Sept. 2, 1920, Ibid., 101/4/85.

[115] Law to Stamfordham, Sept. 15, 1920, Ibid., 101/4/88.

[116] Secretary's Notes of a Conference with the Russian Trade Delegation, Sept. 10, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 783-91.

[117] Glenny, "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement," p. 73.

[118] Cabinet minutes, Sept. 15, 1920, CAB 23/22.

and Chicherin countered that Britain really wanted to break off the talks.[119] Chicherin was partially correct. Churchill and Walter Long now resolutely opposed negotiations even if the Soviets accepted the preliminary conditions. For two months they bombarded the Cabinet with memorandums. Long was convinced that the Soviets really sought to destroy Britain. As evidence he pointed to Krassin's alleged role in fomenting unrest among sailors and dockworkers. Churchill accused them of collecting valuable political and military information. He felt that Britons should trade with Russia at their own risk.[120] In October Austen Chamberlain also came out against the conference, probably in response to pressure from business interests.[121]

But some ministers were undecided; Curzon underscored their dilemma. Because of steadily increasing unemployment, he "would be glad to see commercial relations established." However, an agreement would give the Soviets a "renewed lease of life" which they would use to undermine Britain. He finally reaffirmed his willingness to sign an

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[119]For two of these telegrams, see Chicherin to Curzon, Sept. 24, 1920, Soviet Documents, I, 211-12, and Curzon to Chicherin, Oct. 1, 1920, Daily Telegraph, Oct. 11, 1920, p. 5.

[120]E.g., memorandums by Long, Sept. 27, Sept. 30, 1920, CAB 24/111, 24/112, and memorandum by Churchill, Sept. 21, 1920, CAB 24/111.

[121]Glenny, "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement," p. 74.

agreement if the Soviets adhered to the terms of the June 30 note and his September 15 memorandum.[122]

In mid-November the Soviets released a group of British prisoners.[123] Interpreting this as a conciliatory gesture, the Cabinet discussed a possible resumption of negotiations. The Prime Minister and Horne spoke affirmatively because of rising unemployment. Bonar Law cited other reasons: Soviet propaganda was only a minor irritant; Britain could influence Russia more effectively if an agreement was signed; and it would be impolitic to veto an accord when many Britons believed in a vast Russian market waiting to be tapped. Curzon argued for Soviet acceptance of every condition, but the Prime Minister replied that their propaganda could not be contained completely. The discussion ended without a decision.[124] During the meeting Churchill told his close friend Birkenhead that he would resign if the Prime Minister prevailed. That afternoon Birkenhead criticized Churchill: "You will find yourself the hero of the Morning Post and the leader of some thirty Tories in the

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[122] Memorandum by Curzon, Nov. 14, 1920, CAB 24/114.

[123] Memorandum by the Foreign Office, Dec. 30, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 866.

[124] Cabinet minutes, Nov. 17, 1920, CAB 23/23. Law and Horne also publicly urged support for Lloyd George; see Debates, CXXXIII (Oct. 26, 1920), cols. 1519-21, and The Times, Nov. 13, 1920, p. 10.

House of Commons, who disagree with you on ninety percent of all subjects about which you feel really deeply."[125] When the discussion resumed the next day, Churchill told Lloyd George: "You are on the high road to embrace Bolshevism. I am going to keep off that and denounce them on all possible occasions." Austen Chamberlain and Birkenhead reluctantly supported the victorious Prime Minister. Churchill did not resign. The decision was publicized that afternoon.[126]

The Tory press response was conditioned largely by recent events. After the Russo-Polish war many papers had wanted the Soviets expelled.[127] In mid-November, when the Bolsheviks captured Sebastopol, the last White stronghold, several papers feared they would attack the Middle East, and even India.[128] The Daily Telegraph typified the generally critical press reception of the Cabinet's decision: "Can this be useful, in any shape, either to Russia or to the world? Must it not rather be pernicious since it will

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[125]Glenny, "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement," pp. 75-76.

[126]Cabinet minutes, Nov. 18, 1920, CAB 23/23.

[127]The Times, Sept. 10, p. 11, Sept. 11, p. 9, Oct. 8, 1920, p. 11; Daily Mail, Sept. 22, 1920, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, Aug. 20, 1920, p. 8.

[128]Morning Post, Nov. 14, 1920, p. 5; Daily Telegraph, Nov. 16, 1920, p. 12; The Times, Nov. 16, 1920, p. 13.

delay the inevitable downfall of the frantic despotism which is the cause of Russia's penury?"[129] As usual the Spectator and the Observer offered support. The latter paper was ecstatic: "In the first 12 months after re-opening trade, Russia would certainly place in this country orders for machinery and manufacture to the tune of at least £100,000,000."[130]

In early December Horne and Krassin exchanged draft agreements, and discussions resumed to solve three remaining differences. First, Britain insisted that the Soviet government and their citizens refrain from "hostile action or propaganda" in Britain, the Empire, the Caucasus, Asia Minor, Persia, and Afghanistan. The Soviet draft section did not mention specific areas. Next, the Soviets wanted special legislation to prevent British creditors from confiscating their exports. Britain protested that such laws would be illegal. Finally, Britain demanded Soviet compensation for unpaid services or goods supplied by Britons; other claims were to be considered in another treaty. Russia wanted all claims deferred to a later treaty.[131]

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[129] Daily Telegraph, n.d., cited by Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 46-47.

[130] Spectator, CXXV (Nov. 20, 1920), 661-62; Observer, Nov. 21, 1920, p. 12.

[131] The Soviet and the British drafts can be found in Appendix to a Foreign Office memorandum, Dec. 30, 1920, British Documents, ser. 1, VIII, 869-78.

On December 21 both sides offered minor concessions, but no progress was made on the debt question.[132] The next day Horne publicized the government's growing irritation by accusing the Soviets of stalling at the conference and even conceding that Russia had nothing to trade. To reassure edgy Conservatives he declared that other classes of debts would never be abandoned.[133]

From December to March, 1921 Tory press opponents of a trade agreement generally were silent, apparently believing the deadlock was insurmountable.[134] However, Labourites and the coterie of Conservative press supporters became more vocal, blaming the government for the impasse.[135] The Foreign Office also admitted that "there have been a good many indications lately of a change of mind in

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[132]Draft Secretary's Notes of a Conference, Dec. 21, 1920, Ibid., pp. 879-92.

[133]Debates, CXXX (Dec. 22, 1920), cols. 1865-78.

[134]For a few of these infrequent editorials, see Daily Telegraph, Dec. 15, 1920, p. 10; Morning Post, Dec. 21, 1920, p. 6; and The Times, Dec. 22, 1920, p. 11.

[135]See Observer, Dec. 12, 1920, p. 13; Spectator, CXXVI (Feb. 12, 1921), 189; and Sunday Times, Dec. 12, Dec. 19, 1920, appended to a memorandum by Commander Maxse (Foreign Office civil servant), Jan. 5, 1921, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Files, General Correspondence, Political, FO 371/6877. (General Correspondence, Political, hereinafter referred to as FO 371/ .)

commercial and industrial circles."[136] Tory backbencher J. D. Rees, a leading anti-Bolshevik, also changed his stand.[137]

During the winter months Curzon and Chicherin again exchanged insulting telegrams. Curzon had become exasperated by Chicherin's tactics:

> With so colossal and finished a liar it is useless to cope. Nor, after my last reply, which I said would be the last of the series, would I propose to do so. The fusilade might go on till the dark-haired among us become grey, the grey-haired white, and the white bald.[138]

In January and February Chicherin worked hard to improve his bargaining position. On February 26 Russia signed a treaty with Persia, which in turn denounced an Anglo-Persian treaty negotiated by Curzon in 1919. Agreements with Afghanistan and Turkey followed.[139] The Soviets thus encroached upon Britain's Middle East preserve and rendered superfluous her insistence on naming specific countries in the draft trade agreement. Moreover, Russia began to place large industrial orders in Europe. In

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[136] Memorandum by N. Clark (Foreign Office civil servant), Dec. 21, 1920, FO 371/5434.

[137] Debates, CXXXVI (Dec. 20, 1920), cols. 1259-60.

[138] Memorandum by Curzon, Feb. n.d., 1921, FO 371/6853. For a representative telegram from Chicherin, see Soviet Documents, I, 230-33.

[139] Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, III, 289-304; Glenny, "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement," pp. 80-81.

Britain it was rumored that many Soviet mining and lumbering concessions were about to be granted to foreigners.[140]

On March 4 Horne informed Krassin that the government would sign an agreement after the terms were discussed in Commons. There on March 9 four Tory opponents repeated the moral and economic arguments.[141] Two Conservatives responded favorably. Although Lord Robert Cecil objected to Labour's contention that trade was a panacea for domestic problems, he believed that the agreement would promote peace. Lambert Ward believed the Labour party had so exaggerated the beneficial results of trade that he supported an accord just to prove them wrong: "If there is any trade to be done it will all be to the advantage of this country. If there is no trade to be done, then they have tried and it is their funeral."[142] In reply Robert Horne hoped that trade would restore Russia to the mainstream of civilization and help the European economy. Although reassuring Tory backbenchers on the debt question, he dismissed their moral objections to "tainted" Russian gold.[143]

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[140] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 293.

[141] Debates, CXXXIX (March 9, 1921), cols. 525-28, 564-66, 572-75, 576-77.

[142] Ibid., cols. 531-33, 561-63.

[143] Ibid., cols. 535-40.

On March 14 the Cabinet removed Asia Minor, the Caucasus, and Persia from their list of areas off limits to Soviet propaganda, retaining only Britain, the Empire, India, and Afghanistan. In return Britain would refrain from direct or indirect propaganda or hostile action against Soviet Russia and the areas formerly within the Russian empire. The Cabinet consented to protect Soviet ships, cargoes, and gold from British creditors. Finally, they agreed that the future general treaty would be a "peace" treaty, thus opening the possibility of de jure relations. However, they insisted that the Soviets recognize their liability to compensate Britons for unpaid goods.[144] Even this was watered down in the actual treaty, where the Soviets recognized their responsibility only "in principle." The deposition of all debts was left to the later peace treaty. The Trade Agreement signed on March 16 also included an exchange of trade delegations with diplomatic immunity. And if the propaganda clauses were violated, either party could cancel the Agreement upon six-months' notice.[145]

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[144] Cabinet minutes, March 14, 1921, reprinted in FO 371/6854.

[145] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 1, 1921), Cmnd. 1207, "Trade Agreement between His Brittanic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic," (London, 1921).

The Cabinet's capitulation to key Soviet demands was induced by several factors. Russia's diplomatic successes in the Middle East had undercut Britain's rationale for excluding her influence from the area. The Cabinet also feared losing desperately needed foreign trade: Krassin later called this the "final reason."[146] Moreover, Winston Churchill had since left the War Office to become Secretary of State for the Colonies, and his interest in Russia was reduced considerably. Illness had forced another hard liner, Walter Long, to retire.

As the government rushed to conclude the Agreement, most Conservative papers were focusing on the Kronstadt rising. Many sprinkled their columns with dispatches from Helsinki and Copenhagen predicting the Soviets' downfall. On March 5 The Times reported, "The white flag is hoisted over the Winter Palace and the Kremlin."[147] Editorial writers, however, felt the lack of adequate information precluded an accurate assessment.[148] After the Agreement was initialed, Tory press opponents were angered. The

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[146]Krassin's comments can be found in Xenia Eudin and H. H. Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927: a Documentary Survey (Stanford, 1957), p. 65.

[147]The Times, March 5, 1921, p. 12.

[148]Ibid., March 2, p. 12, March 5, 1921, p. 11; Daily Telegraph, March 18, 1920, p. 9. The Morning Post, March 14, 1921, p. 7, disagreed.

Times felt Britain had been shortchanged, especially by the clause prohibiting creditors from attaching Russian gold. The Daily Mail and the Morning Post assailed the Prime Minister for bracing the tottering Soviets again; they predicted a Tory rebellion. The National Review denounced the "chicken-hearted swashbucklers of the Carlton Club who are as mum as mice."[149] Many financial and commercial concerns also dissented.[150]

The numerous clauses favoring the Bolsheviks led Tory press supporters to allay their enthusiasm. The Observer feared Soviet interference in those Middle East countries not enumerated in the propaganda clause. The Spectator combined its "general" satisfaction with an attack on "the maddest Government that the fanaticism of man ever conceived." Like these journals Time and Tide cautioned against any immediate trade benefits.[151]

In Commons on March 22 Lloyd George claimed the Agreement would help pacify Europe and convert the Soviets into "honest, sober, decent citizens" through a gentle-

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[149]The Times, March 17, 1921, p. 11; Daily Mail, March 17, 1921, p. 6; Morning Post, March 17, 1921, p. 6; National Review, LXXVII (April, 1921), 165. See also Saturday Review, CXXXI (March 19, 1921), 229; Cardiff Western Mail, March 17, 1921 p. 5; and Daily Telegraph, March 17, 1921, p. 10.

[150]For representative comments, see Morning Post, March 18, 1921, pp. 7-8.

[151]Observer, March 20, 1921, p.13; Spectator, CXXVI (March 19, 1921), 350; Time and Tide, II (March 18, 1921), 246.

manly process of instruction." Sensing support from most voters and business firms, he stated that Tory objections "do not seem to have permeated beyond the walls of this House."[152] During the debate Conservative dissenters charged that the Agreement was signed too hastily, accorded de facto recognition to bankrupt criminals, and disregarded the creditors' claims.[153] Earlier in the day Edward Wood had called for its suspension on the ground that Soviet propaganda was continuing in India and Afghanistan.[154] Only one Conservative defended it: J. D. Rees believed that the absence of trade heightened the misery of the Russian people.[155]

By ending the three-year undeclared war between the two countries, the Trade Agreement marked an important turning point in their relations. But Lloyd George did not prevail easily. Had Tory pressure been less intense, the Agreement might have been signed much earlier, and on terms even more favorable to Russia. Even so, Lloyd George's successful conclusion of the negotiations against strong opposition is a fitting testimony to his political sagacity.

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[152] Debates, CXXXIX (March 22, 1921), cols. 2505-12.

[153] Ibid., cols. 2495-2505, 2514-17, 2520-22.

[154] Ibid., cols. 2335-36.

[155] Ibid., cols. 2522-25.

The different groupings of Tory opinion toward Russia began to emerge more clearly during the negotiations. The Observer, the Spectator, Time and Tide, and Lord Robert Cecil became the leading exponents of the "conciliatory" viewpoint. The "centrists," a small but influential group at this time, were willing to deal with the Soviets if they made only minimal concessions to Britain. A surprising number of Cabinet ministers, led by Law and Horne, chose this stand. Perhaps they were influenced by Lloyd George's charisma and by increasing unemployment. The "rightists" asked for more extensive Russian concessions: led by Curzon in the Cabinet, these Tories seem to have been supported by a majority of Tory newspapers and backbenchers. The "ultras" denounced any contacts with the Bolsheviks. Although their ranks were swollen in 1919, the defeat of the Whites reduced their numbers considerably in the following decade. Walter Long and the Morning Post exemplified the "ultra" viewpoint at this time.

Despite these differences of opinion no Tories favored war with Russia, and all felt that Britain should have extracted better terms in the Trade Agreement. When Lloyd George moved to normalize relations with Russian during the last year of the Coalition, many Tories worked hard to insure that he adopted a stronger position at the bargaining table.

CHAPTER V

ATTEMPTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS

Initial Stalemate

Between the spring and the fall of 1921 Tories paid little attention to the Soviets. Internal changes in Russia, however, attracted some interest. When Lenin announced a New Economic Policy to revitalize the Soviet economy, many Tory papers were ebullient.[1] The Times stated, "The fanatic who begins to doubt has lost half his power." The Morning Post added, "Saul has become a bourgeois." The Daily Telegraph claimed the move was inevitable because Bolshevism violated human nature.[2] The Soviets also began to concede that capitalist states were more resistant to revolution than expected. Without disavowing their ultimate goal of world revolution, they were willing to coexist with the West.[3] The Spectator saw these declarations as a desperate attempt to stave off the next inevitable Russian revolution.[4] Other publications cautioned against premature

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[1]Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, II, 280-359, discusses the NEP in detail.

[2]The Times, March 15, 1921, p. 11; Morning Post, March 14, 1921, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, April 23, 1921, p. 9.

[3]For excerpts from two Soviet announcements, see Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, pp. 82-84, 91-94.

[4]Spectator, CXXVI (April 16, 1921), 482-83.

expectations. The Times, for example, accepted the pronouncements at face value. Almost alone the Observer predicted that the Soviets would become democratic because their revolutionary spirit had been softened by re-emerging Russian nationalism.[5]

A significant issue involving the Bolsheviks came to a head in August, 1921 when The Times published a series proving the Protocols of the Elders of Zion was a forgery.[6] This disclosure helped refute the belief of some Conservatives that the Soviets really were part of a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world. British anti-Semitism was non-virulent by Continental standards, but the large number of Jewish Bolsheviks had led to increased anti-Semitic rhetoric among Tories. Russian correspondents for several Tory newspapers had transmitted anti-Semitic reports even before the November Revolution.[7]

During the first two years of Soviet rule, such right-wing Tory publications as the National Review often

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[5]The Times, June 28, p. 11, June 30, 1921, p. 11; Observer, Jan. 8, 1922, p. 12.

[6]The Times, Aug. 15, p. 9, Aug. 16, p. 9, Aug. 17, 1921, p. 9.

[7]E.g., the report of Robert Wilton in The Times, April 7, 1917, p. 5. A correspondent for the Daily Telegraph, E. Ashmead-Bartlett, was an avowed anti-Semite. In 1920 he referred to Bolshevism as a "Jewish mafia movement"; see The Times, Jan. 26, 1920, p. 8.

included anti-Jewish slurs in their editorials. But the Saturday Review explained that Jews had become revolutionaries as the result of Tsarist persecution.[8] Daily Telegraph editorials never broached the subject. The Times, whose policy in this matter was typical, occasionally included the Jewish surnames of some Bolshevik leaders in parentheses but never went much beyond that. In late 1919 it opened its columns to a discussion of the relationship between Bolsheviks and Jews. Readers' questions were answered by Britain's Jewish leaders, including Philip Magnus, a Unionist M.P. Like the others Magnus admitted that many Bolsheviks were Jews, but he maintained that the overwhelming majority of his co-religionists abhorred Bolshevism.[9]

Although a few "ultra" backbenchers sometimes injected anti-Semitic remarks into their speeches, most Tories followed their leaders in avoiding the subject. However, the government's White Paper of April, 1919 included a charge that Bolshevism was a German-Jewish conspiracy.[10]

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[8]National Review, LXXIV (December, 1919), 442; Saturday Review, CXXVIII (Dec. 6, 1919), 526-27.

[9]The Times, Dec. 15, 1919, p. 19. In November and December, 1919 The Times was filled with letters to the editor on the subject.

[10]"A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism," pp. 41-42.

In January, 1920 a translation of Nilus' Protocols of the Elders of Zion had been circulated in Britain.[11] One Tory paper swallowed the tale: in the first of several commentaries the Morning Post proclaimed, "Lenin speaks for a secret world-wide organization of which he is merely a tool."[12] In the summer it printed a series on an alleged Jewish-Masonic plot to enslave the world. When this was later published as a book, The Cause of World Unrest, H. A. Gwynne, the Morning Post's editor, wrote an introduction attacking politicized Jews. Although Gwynne disliked being called an anti-Semite, he was willing to endure the misnomer as long as the alleged Jewish-Bolshevik clique threatened Britain.[13] The Times never commented editorially on the Protocols, but in May, 1920 a correspondent stated that Soviet methods validated the book's allegations.[14] The Spectator defended Gwynne's right to speak: "We hold that a case for inquiry has been made out, and we most

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See also Walter Laqueur, Russia and Germany, a Century of Conflict (Boston, 1965), pp. 90-92.

[11] Norman Cohn, Warrant for Genocide (New York, 1967), pp. 149-68, examines the world-wide reaction to the post-war appearance of the Protocols.

[12] Morning Post, Jan. 17, p. 6, Dec. 15, 1921, p. 6.

[13] The Cause of World Unrest (New York, 1920), pp. v-xxxiii.

[14] The Times, May 8, 1920, p. 15.

sincerely wish that some body of the nature of a Royal Commission could be appointed to inquire into the whole subject." In April, 1921 the Spectator warned Russian Jews to reject Bolshevism or face a pogrom once it collapsed.[15] The National Review alluded to the Protocols repeatedly in its editorials, and even the Daily Telegraph betrayed a tinge of bias when it referred to "Trotsky-Bronstein" in August, 1920.[16]

Only a handful of Tory politicians, however, were impressed by the Protocols. In an article titled "The Jewish World Problem," Lord Sydenham wrote that all Bolshevik leaders were Jews acting out the Protocols. He pleaded with "Gentile" nations to overcome the "power-loving Oriental race." To this end, British Jews should be made to drop their "Saxon or Norman 'cover names'" and to disavow their "double nationality" by swearing allegiance to Britain alone.[17] Winston Churchill apparently was the only Cabinet minister to comment on the Protocols. In the Illustrated Sunday Herald he mentioned a world-wide

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[15] Spectator, CXXV (Oct. 16, 1920), 489-90, CXXVI (April 16, 1921), 483.

[16] National Review, LXXV (June, 1920), 448; Daily Telegraph, Aug. 19, 1920, p. 8.

[17] The Nineteenth Century and After, XC (November, 1921), 888-901.

"sinister confederacy" of Jews who had been trying to "overthrow civilisation" since the eighteenth century. The Bolsheviks, he explained, never disturbed "Jewish interests and Jewish places of worship." To eliminate these "international" Jews he urged the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.[18]

After The Times exposed the Protocols in the summer of 1921, most Tories dropped the subject. Some papers were apologetic: the National Review now explained why some Russian Jews joined revolutionary movements.[19] Thereafter, only a few "ultra" Tory politicians and journalists made anti-Semitic statements.

As interest in the Protocols subsided, Britain began monitoring alleged Soviet violations of the Trade Agreement. In September the Cabinet directed Curzon to send a protest note. However, they decided not to publish the note, as was customary, and agreed that it "should stop short of an actual threat of cancellation of the Trade Agreement, which should at this stage be held in reserve."[20] The dispatch

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[18] Illustrated Sunday Herald, Feb. 8, 1920, p. 5. See also an earlier anti-Semitic slur in one of his speeches on Bolshevism in The Russian Outlook, I (May 26, 1919), supplement, p. v.

[19] National Review, LXXVIII (December, 1921), 490-500.

[20] Cabinet minutes, Sept. 14, 1921, reprinted in FO 371/6845.

handed to Chicherin on Spetember 17 detailed a long list of complaints: anti-British speeches by Soviet and Comintern leaders; Soviet agents operating in Afghanistan and India; a propaganda school in Tashkent which trained Indian revolutionaries; and Soviet support for an Indian "anarchist" who smuggled bombs into India from his factory in Afghanistan.[21]

On September 20 the note was leaked somehow to the press, but it attracted little attention. Those Tory papers which did comment charged that the Soviets could not be restrained by the Trade Agreement for they were contemptuous of Western law and good faith. But only The Times called for cancellation.[22]

The Soviet reply claimed the charges were forgeries or fabrications. One defense was to be repeated often during the decade:

> The Russian Government wishes to take this occasion to emphasize . . . that the mere facts of the Third International having for obvious reasons chosen

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[21]Curzon to Chicherin, Sept. 7, 1921, Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 3, 1927), Cmnd. 2895, "A Selection of Papers Dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921-1927," (London, 1927), pp. 4-12. The date on the British note is misleading. (Hereinafter referred to as "A Selection of Papers.")

[22]The Times, Sept. 21, p. 11, Sept. 24, 1921, p. 9; Morning Post, Sept. 21, 1921, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, Sept. 22, 1921, p. 10; Saturday Review, CXXXII (Sept. 24, 1921), 360.

> Russia as the seat of its executive committee . . . and of some of the members of the Russian Government in their individual capacity belonging to the executive committee, give no more justification for identifying the Third International with the Russian Government than the Second International, having its seat in Brussels or counting among the members of its executive M. Vandervelde, a Belgian Minister, and Mr. Henderson, a British Cabinet Minister, gave justification for rendering identical the Second International with the Belgian or British Government. Moreover, the Executive Committee of the Third International consists of thirty-one members, among whom are only five Russians, including three who do not belong to the Russian Government.[23]

Curzon ridiculed the statement: "When the Russian Government desire to take some action more than usually repugnant to normal international law and comity, they ordinarily erect some ostensibly independent authority to take the action on their behalf."[24] Correspondence ended with this angry note.

The Times attempted to enliven the issue by printing letters from Conservative politicians who argued that continuing Bolshevik propaganda and the absence of real economic benefits negated the reasons for the Agreement.[25] Robert Horne, replacing Chamberlain as Chancellor of the Exchequer

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[23] Litvinov to Curzon, Sept. 27, 1921, Soviet Documents, I, 257-62.

[24] Curzon to Litvinov, Oct. 6, 1921, "A Selection of Papers," pp. 17-20.

[25] The Times, Sept. 24, 1921, p. 9. See especially the letter from Lord Long of Wraxall (Walter Long) in The Times, Oct. 15, 1921, p. 6.

in April, admitted in October that Anglo-Russian trade was much lower than even the government's moderate expectations.[26] One Tory apparently was carried away by Curzon's allegations: backbencher Martin Archer-Shee asked that imported Russian scrap iron be searched for hidden bombs.[27] But the Observer implored the government to extend de jure recognition to Russia.[28] The generally indifferent Tory response to the note is puzzling. Perhaps their attention was centered on a greater drama then unfolding.

The Russian Famine

In the summer of 1921 the Soviets announced that 25,000,000 Russians were starving, the victims of a widespread famine which had resulted from a combination of human error and natural disaster.[29] On August 5 the Cabinet ruled out extensive aid because of Britain's financial

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[26] Ibid., Oct. 14, 1921, p. 11. British exports to Russia in 1921 did not reach £ 4 million, in contrast to the 1913 figure of £ 28 million. Unless otherwise indicated, these and all following trade statistics are taken from a detailed trade memorandum by Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (President of the Board of Trade), Jan. 28, 1927, CAB 24/184.

[27] Debates, CXLVII (Oct. 31, 1921), col. 1328.

[28] Observer, Oct. 16, 1921, p. 12.

[29] For a detailed study of the causes of the famine, see H. H. Fisher, The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919-1923: the Operations of the American Relief Administration (New York, 1927), pp. 469-506.

difficulties. However, the ministers noted that "the famine districts were those which had longest resisted the Bolsheviks; that when Bolshevism disappeared, the Russian people would remain, and it would be a wise policy to give so emotional a people reason for gratitude." The Cabinet then agreed to endorse a British voluntary fund and to extend a loan if the necessary guarantees were offered. But Britons would have to administer both relief programs.[30]

In Commons on August 16 Lloyd George also announced that Britain would participate in an international relief effort. Although declining to capitalize on the Soviets' misfortune, he urged them to compensate their foreign debtors. Only in this way would Western traders regain enough confidence to export the goods necessary to overcome the famine.[31] Tory speakers who followed Lloyd George outlined their party's dominant response to the calamity. J. D. Rees reasoned that even an international effort could not prevent millions of Russian peasants from starving and other millions from migrating into Western Europe in search of food. Unmoved by the Prime Minister's appeal, Walter Guinness asserted:

> The famine was a symptom of a disease which cannot be dealt with by a mere policy of relief. Drought

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[30]Cabinet minutes, Aug. 5, 1921, reprinted in FO 371/6919.

[31]Debates, CXLVI (Aug. 16, 1921), cols. 1236-42.

> may have had much to do with it, but much more responsible is the Bolshevik policy which has destroyed the railways and has stopped that production upon which even a simple system of bartering should be founded.

He doubted if the Soviets would facilitate relief efforts and concluded that the famine might have been a hoax.[32]

A number of Tory newspapers also blamed the Soviets and opposed a public grant or a conditional loan, fearing the Soviets would strengthen their tyranny rather than succor the victims. These papers also were not enthusiastic about private contributions.[33] Their special correspondents in the famine districts mostly seemed interested in denouncing the Bolsheviks.[34] Letters from Tory politicians supporting these journals indicated widespread hostility to public famine relief.[35] However, the Observer and Time and Tide urged government credits for Russia, coupling their request with pleas for de jure recognition.[36] Other Tory publications backed an international relief effort.[37]

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[32] Ibid., cols. 1249-51, 1262-63.

[33] The Times, Aug. 8, p. 9, Aug. 25, p. 9, Sept. 10, 1921, p. 11; Morning Post, Aug. 8, 1921, p. 5; Daily Mail, Aug. 11, 1921, p. 4; Daily Telegraph, Sept. 10, 1921 p. 8.

[34] E.g., Daily Mail, Aug. 20, 1921, p. 5, and The Times, Sept. 13, 1921, p. 11.

[35] The Times, Sept. 8, p. 9, Sept. 24, 1921, p. 9; Saturday Review, CXXXII (Nov. 5, 1921), 531.

[36] Observer, Aug. 21, p. 8, Oct. 9, 1921, p. 12; Time and Tide, II (Aug. 19, 1921), 783.

[37] Spectator, CXXVII (Sept. 17, 1921), 352-53;

Because the Soviets refused to allow Western delegates into the famine area, the anticipated Allied program never materialized. The International Red Cross, however, sponsored a Committee for Russian Relief which negotiated an aid agreement.[38] A few Tory papers criticized the Committee for allowing Soviet participation in the distribution of supplies.[39] In Britain the Imperial War Relief Fund, the Save the Children Fund, and the Friends' Emergency and War Victims Relief Committee launched appeals. The Labour party, too, joined the effort.[40]

The British government repeatedly refused funds or credits unless the Soviets recognized their debts.[41] The September protest note hardened the Cabinet's position. In late October the Soviets offered to acknowledge a minor class of debts in return for a loan, but Curzon demanded recognition of all debts.[42] The Labour party, however,

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Saturday Review, CXXXII (Sept. 10, 1921), 311; National Review, LXXVIII (September, 1921), 26-27.

[38]Fisher, The Famine in Soviet Russia, pp. 62-67.

[39]The Times, Sept. 10, 1921, p. 11; National Review, LXXVIII (October, 1921), 165-66.

[40]Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 226-28.

[41]For an exhaustive defense of this view, see Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame (Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department) to Rex Leeper (Foreign Office civil servant), Sept. 21, 1921, FO 371/6923.

[42]Krassin to Curzon, Oct. 30, 1921, Curzon to Krassin,

lobbied frequently for a public grant, and a few Conservatives joined them. On October 20 Lord Robert Cecil accused the government and many of his fellow backbenchers of aiming to destroy Bolshevism by allowing mass starvation. On moral, political, and economic grounds he requested credits of £ 1 to £ 2 million.[43]

On November 8 the government announced a grant of £ 100,000 in medical stores to the British Red Cross. During the debate Labourites charged that it was too little and too late. Lord Robert Cecil added that Russians needed food, not medical supplies.[44] Other Tories responded differently. Austen Hopkinson was "sick of these stale bleeding hearts. They begin to stink in our nostrils." In his view relief was "simply throwing millions into a bottomless pit." J. D. Rees agreed, claiming that taxpayers were in no position to subsidize Russia. J. C. Gould also was emphatic, "It is the greatest piece of hypocrisy that we have to face to-day when public men stand up and pretend to be charitable by dealing this way with other people's money." Despite this opposition the government secured their request easily.[45]

Nov. 1, 1921, cited by Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 62-64.

[43] Debates, CXLVII (Oct. 20, 1921), cols. 324-32.

[44] Ibid., CXLVIII (Nov. 8, 1921), cols. 305-9.

[45] Ibid., cols. 313-18, 327-32, 334-37.

In the following months private charities raised over £ 1 million, but they were hindered by the anti-Soviet views of several Tory journalists.[46] In November the Daily Express began to campaign against all relief efforts, on the premise that voluntary contributions should be spent in Britain. Its special correspondent in Russia reported that the Soviets had ample food supplies. Despite objections from relief organizations and from Lord Curzon, the Daily Express stood firm.[47]

In the spring of 1922 the government decided to increase their relief efforts, probably in response to two developments. In February Sir Benjamin Robertson, an Indian famine expert, published a widely circulated evaluation of the British program in Russia which praised the Soviets for their cooperation but criticized Britain's miserly contribution. Moreover, he found that some of the medical stores given in November had been contaminated and that 200 tons of lime juice had been included in one shipment. Robertson proposed an outright government grant of £ 350,000 to

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[46] For a typical editorial, see The Times, Sept. 8, 1921, p. 9.

[47] Lord Weardale (Chairman of the Save the Children Fund) to the editor of the Daily Express, Nov. 21, 1921, Curzon to Weardale, Nov. 23, 1921, FO 371/ 6926. See also Raymond Postgate, England Goes to Press, 1815-1937 (Indianapolis, 1937), pp. 307-11.

British charities.[48] An important political consideration also helped modify the government's inflexibility: Lloyd George then was attempting to bring Russia back into the comity of nations; and a timely relief grant would assist his efforts.

On March 6 the Cabinet discussed the Prime Minister's proposal to give £ 250,000 to £ 350,000 to three British relief agencies. Churchill and other ministers protested on financial grounds. Balfour thought the funds should be spent in countries bordering Russia to prevent the spread of disease. Claiming that the proposal was purely humanitarian, only Curzon offered support. The meeting ended without a decision.[49] Two days later the Prime Minister argued in vain with his colleagues: the Cabinet agreed to offer only some additional supplies.[50]

On March 17 Commons debated the plan to give £ 100,000 in food and medicine to the relief agencies. Every Labour speaker pleaded for a much larger appropriation, but Conservatives again were divided. Those defending the government used familiar arguments: Britain's economic

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[48] Report by Robertson, Feb. n.d., 1922, British Museum, Viscount (Lord Robert) Cecil Papers, Box I, (8). For favorable reactions, see Lords Debates, XLIX (Feb. 22, 1922), cols. 213-27.

[49] Cabinet minutes, March 6, 1922, CAB 23/29.

[50] Ibid., March 8, 1922.

plight ruled out a greater sum; they had no right to give away taxpayers' money; and Soviet mismanagement had caused the famine.[51] Three Tories spoke against the motion. Samuel Hoare, who had just finished serving as League of Nations High Commissioner for White Russian refugees, wanted a monetary grant because he had found that foodstuffs were difficult to distribute. Since the American Congress already had voted $20 million for the famine victims, Hoare believed Britain could afford at least £ 350,000. Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck charged that British intervention had helped to bring on the famine. He backed Hoare's request both on humanitarian and on selfish economic grounds. Lord Robert Cecil believed that if a famine occurred in France the government would offer assistance immediately. In his view Bolshevik crimes were extraneous to the basic issue of millions of starving people. He suggested a grant of £ 500,000.[52]

Austen Chamberlain cited numerous statistics to show why the government could do nothing more. And if they did, Labour soon would demand countless millions. Besides, the present proposal was Britain's greatest contribution ever to victims of a foreign disaster. Although the govern-

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[51] Debates, CLI (March 17, 1922), cols. 2577-84, 2599-2602.

[52] Ibid., cols. 2585-91, 2603-5, 2608-16.

ment carried the vote handily, eighteen Conservatives dissented.[53]

The Morning Post denounced the vote as "foolish generosity" which merely kept the Bolsheviks in power.[54] But a few papers urged a greater effort, and several Conservative M.P.'s joined the bipartisan Russian Famine Parliamentary Committee to lobby for a larger appropriation.[55] Within a few months, however, the famine issue subsided when the Soviets began to reap an adequate harvest.

Conservatives clearly were divided on famine relief. The Tories opposing the government on March 17 were one of the largest blocs voting against the party leadership on any question involving Russia during the 1920's. Supporters of both views used weighty arguments. Famine relief might have lessened Anglo-Soviet tensions, but Britain's minuscule contributions and Soviet quarrels with relief agencies only intensified the estrangement. The Soviets believed Conservatives wanted to eradicate Bolshevism through starvation. Whether true or not, their suspicions were shared by Lord Robert Cecil and other Tories opposed to such a policy.

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[53] Ibid., cols. 2616-26.

[54] Morning Post, March 23, 1922, p. 5.

[55] Observer, March 12, 1922, p. 12; English Review, XXXIV (March, 1922), 282-85; Harry Barnes, M.P., to Austen Chamberlain, March 28, 1922, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 29/1/16.

Moreover, the famine controversy hindered Lloyd George's latest attempt to come to terms with Russia.

The Genoa Conference

On January 6, 1922 the Allied Supreme Council had invited the Soviets to participate in a European financial and economic conference to be held at Genoa in March. Lloyd George envisioned the general Continental settlement that had eluded him at Versailles. And he was influenced by political considerations. In the preceding two years his power had waned as numerous domestic and foreign crises contradicted the grandiose expectations of 1918. Rumors of a general election spread rapidly as Coalition Tories became restless. They especially resented the Prime Minister's allegedly dictatorial and unprincipled methods. Some Tories feared the demise of their party if it remained tied to his coattails in another election.[56] If Genoa succeeded, Lloyd George might recapture Tory allegiance and disarm Labour opponents of his Russian policy.[57]

Soviet leaders had talked repeatedly of a detente

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[56] Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, Baldwin: a Biography (London, 1969), pp. 95-104, review the discontent within the Tory party at this time.

[57] For an evaluation of Lloyd George's political motivations, see Taylor, English History, p. 189.

with the West.[58] The NEP reforms seemed to buttress their words. Lloyd George apparently anticipated a total abandonment of Communism. He was impressed especially when Lenin admitted on November 1, 1921 that even he could not predict how far the capitalist reforms might go.[59]

On December 15 Lord Birkenhead, the Lord Chancellor, outlined the Prime Minister's goal: "It is for us to gather up the salvage of Europe, and in order to do that you must come to an arrangement with France and with Germany. And you must also come to an arrangement with Russia as well."[60] The next day the Cabinet consented to Soviet participation if they recognized their debts and provided facilities for foreign traders. The Prime Minister also suggested de jure recognition, but his colleagues insisted that before this was done they should be consulted. In the meantime, they were "in no way committed." Winston Churchill apparently led the opposition.[61]

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[58]Many extracts from Soviet notes and newspaper editorials can be found in FO 371/6856. See also Russian Information and Review, I (Nov. 15, 1921), 74. This weekly magazine was the official organ of the Information Department of the Russian Trade Delegation in London.

[59]Lord Swinton (Philip Lloyd-Greame), I Remember (London, 1948), p. 17. Lloyd George referred to Lenin's speech in Debates, CLII (April 3, 1922), col. 1900.

[60]Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 65.

[61]Cabinet minutes, Dec. 16, 1921, extracts reprinted in Cabinet minutes, March 28, 1922, Appendix I, CAB 23/29; Young, Churchill and Beaverbrook, p. 59.

At Cannes on January 6, 1922 the Allied Supreme Council issued the Conference invitations. At the request of the Cabinet and the French government, all participants were asked to agree beforehand to guarantee the property rights and products of foreign investors, recognize all public and private debts, and abstain from subversive propaganda abroad. If the Soviets accepted these and other terms, the Allies would consider de jure recognition and credits.[62]

The Times claimed that Russia could not be reconstructed until the Bolsheviks were overthrown. The Morning Post doubted Soviet sincerity. However, the Spectator, the Observer, and the Saturday Review felt that Russia should be given an opportunity to rejoin the European economic community.[63] British bankers believed that the £ 100 million in reconstruction loans needed by Russia would have to be controlled closely by the West.[64]

The Soviets accepted the invitation, but several developments in the three months prior to the Conference

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[62] Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, p. 98; Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, pp. 94-95.

[63] The Times, Jan. 7, p. 7, Jan. 9, 1922, p. 11; Morning Post, Jan. 7, 1922, p. 6; Spectator, CXXVIII (Jan. 21, 1922), 67; Observer, Jan. 8, 1922, p. 12; Saturday Review, CXXXIII (Jan. 14, 1922), 27.

[64] The Times, Jan. 4, 1922, p. 10.

dampened Lloyd George's enthusiasm. In February he agreed reluctantly with French Premier Raymond Poincaré that Russian recognition would not follow automatically even if the Soviets gave satisfactory guarantees and safeguards.[65] As usual, unrestrained Soviet rhetoric heightened Allied suspicions. Soviet leaders demanded unconditional recognition and credits.[66] Despite their bombastic public statements, they feared that Western capitalists either would torpedo the Conference or would attempt to enslave Russia economically.[67] As an alternate way of ending their isolation, the Soviets opened secret negotiations with Germany in April.[68]

Poincaré's objections and Soviet pronouncements hindered Lloyd George's efforts to win over an increasing number of hostile Tories.[69] On March 14 a group of Unionist backbenchers discussed the possibility of withdrawing from

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[65] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 67-69.

[66] Russian Information and Review, I (April 15, 1922), 351-52, details Russia's demands at Genoa.

[67] See Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, pp. 100, 127.

[68] Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, pp. 96-98.

[69] E.g., The History of The Times, IV, Part II, 655, and an editorial and the Duke of Northumberland's diatribe in National Review, LXXVIII (February, 1922), 752-62, 773-86.

the Coalition.[70] Lloyd George unwittingly fueled this mistrust when he explained to a correspondent for the Daily Chronicle, a newspaper long regarded as his mouthpiece, that the Allies would not recognize the Soviets until they offered guarantees. However, his real opinion apparently was given in an editorial in the same issue which stated: "This attitude [Lloyd George's statement] does not alter our own strong conviction that the sooner recognition of Russia can come, the better for peace, present and future." During the interview Lloyd George also challenged Conservatives: the reporter quoted him as saying that "he would part from his dearest political friend rather than abandon this great fundamental issue of politics," i.e., a settlement with Russia.[71] On March 20 he asked for a parliamentary vote of confidence prior to his departure for Italy in early April.[72] A few days later he told Austen Chamberlain that "the Cabinet must choose between Winston and me." He apparently wanted ministerial approval for de jure recognition.[73]

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[70] Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 104. See the statement of Conservative principles drawn up by the leading dissidents in National Review, LXXIX (April, 1922), 312-13.

[71] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 70; Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 105.

[72] The History of The Times, IV, Part II, 655.

[73] Chamberlain to Lloyd George, March 25, 1922, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 23/6/22; Frank Owen, Tempestuous Journey: Lloyd George, his Life and Times (New York, 1955), pp. 611-13.

The Cabinet meeting scheduled for March 28 was designated as the showdown. Unionist leader Austen Chamberlain faced a dilemma because he was committed to keeping the party in the Coalition. He sided with Lloyd George and opposed Churchill on Russian recognition but feared its implications for his party. As he explained to Curzon:

> We Unionists could not be put in a more difficult position. The sympathies of the mass of our party on this issue would be wholly on Winston's side. If we decided against him and he retired, we should have a new and very real split in the party, extending, I am assured, to the Government itself. Imagine what our position would be if Winston resigned because he was more Conservative than the Conservative and Unionist members of the Government. It would be really hopeless.

However, he continued, Horne was attempting to modify the Prime Minister's stand, and Birkenhead was using his influence with Churchill. Chamberlain considered a possible compromise:

> First, a firm adherence to the conditions laid down at Cannes as the necessary preliminary to recognition, and, secondly, a probationary period in which the Russian Government must show that it not only verbally accepts the terms, but is actually proceeding to carry them out. This, I think, would be a sound policy, though it would not please the extremists on either side; but I am very doubtful whether the Prime Minister will consent to the probationary period.[74]

On March 25 Chamberlain wrote the Prime Minister that the Daily Chronicle editorial, probably written "under your

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[74]Chamberlain to Curzon, March 24, 1922, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 23/6/21.

direct inspiration," had been interpreted by Churchill as an obvious challenge, and even Birkenhead, a staunch supporter of the Prime Minister, had reacted with "dismay." The crux of the problem, Chamberlain reasoned, was the timing and conditions of recognition. Even if the Soviets accepted the guarantees in the Cannes proposals, "practically the whole of my party" would demand more than verbal assurances. Chamberlain accused the Prime Minister of deceiving the Cabinet: he had assured his ministers in December, 1921 that recognition was subject to their approval, but now he seemed to suggest that the Cannes proposals had pledged Britain to recognition, conditional only on verbal Soviet acceptance of the invitation. In Chamberlain's view the Cannes proposals were

> a statement of conditions which would be the essential preliminaries of recognition and without which recognition could not even be considered. This implies that if those conditions are accepted recognition would be considered, but it is not a pledge that recognition would be given, and still less a pledge that it would be given at once as a matter of course.

In concluding he reasoned that the Prime Minister was placing himself in a "false position" unless he changed his stand.[75]

Before the Cabinet met, Conservative press opponents

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[75]Chamberlain to Lloyd George, March 25, 1922, Ibid., AC 23/6/22.

of Genoa offered numerous objections: the Bolsheviks had not abandoned Communism; their public statements proved they would not repay their debts; they were coming to Genoa only to secure de jure recognition and loans; and the Conference threatened to alienate France. Several papers denounced Lloyd George for plotting a pre-election coup and for planning recognition without material guarantees. They asked Tories to defeat him in the vote of confidence debate scheduled for April 3.[76] Several Tory backbenchers publicized their opposition.[77] Commercial and financial interests did likewise.[78] The number of Lloyd George's Tory press supporters had diminished since January. The English Review qualified its stand, and other journals became silent. Almost alone now, the Observer labelled Genoa a "shining promise to Europe." Garvin urged the Prime Minister to stand strong against the "die hards and cry hards."[79]

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[76] The Times, March 23, p. 13, March 29, p. 13, March 31, 1922, p. 13; Daily Mail, March 22, p. 8, April 3, 1922, p. 8; Morning Post, March 22, p. 6, March 23, 1922, p. 6; National Review, LXXIX (April, 1922), 161-63.

[77] The Times, March 21, p. 8, April 3, 1922, p. 8. See especially the criticisms of Lord Eustace Percy in National Review, LXXIX (May, 1922), 436.

[78] The Times, April 3, p. 8, April 5, 1922, p. 18.

[79] English Review, XXXIV (March, 1922), 283; Observer, April 2, 1922, p. 12.

Worried by this deepening Tory opposition, Lloyd George met on March 27 with Austen Chamberlain, Churchill, Birkenhead, Conservative War Secretary Laming Worthington-Evans, and Liberal Minister of Health Alfred Mond. The ministers were shown a memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade, Stanley Baldwin, which painted a grim picture of Britain's trade prospects. The primary causes were said to be the reparations issue, unstable monetary exchange rates, and Russia's absence from world markets. Lloyd George maintained that the Soviets had accepted the Cannes conditions "implicitly" when they agreed to come to Genoa, but they also would have to give a "clear and definite acceptance of these principles." Desiring Cabinet solidarity, he accepted Chamberlain's suggestion for a probationary period prior to recognition. But for two reasons he at least wanted to discuss recognition at Genoa: at Cannes he had promised to do so; and he believed that two factions were vying for control of Russia, "one entirely Communistic, and the other prepared to abandon Communism in dealing with foreign countries." If the latter group dominated the Soviet delegation, it would be foolish to remain tight-lipped. He believed that if the Soviets signed the anticipated East European peace pact at Genoa they could exchange lower level diplomats with the West. They would receive full de jure recognition only

after respecting the peace pact and the Cannes conditions for an unspecified period.

Churchill criticized the Prime Minister for not upholding the Cabinet reservations of December 16. He also charged that a prior parliamentary vote of confidence for the Genoa policy would force the Cabinet to accept any Conference results and prevent them from passing judgment on Soviet conduct during the probationary period. Quoting from the British minutes of recent meetings with Soviet and French officials, he tried to show that the Soviets really had not accepted the Cannes proposals, and that France did not think the Allies had agreed to recognition at Cannes. Birkenhead interjected that the Prime Minister did not want a blank check, "It was only contemplated to grant such recognition as was necessary to give effect to the results of the Genoa Conference." Churchill then accepted Lloyd George's proposals.[80]

The next morning Lloyd George, Chamberlain, and Birkenhead met with Curzon. The Foreign Secretary would agree to the plan only if Britain acted with France because unilateral action would be "fatal" to their alliance. Curzon perhaps was convinced that France would

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[80] Conclusions of a Conference of Ministers, March 27, 1922, Cabinet minutes, March 28, 1922, Appendix I, CAB 23/29.

not go along, but Lloyd George accepted his reservation. When Curzon stated that even qualified recognition was tantamount to de jure status, Birkenhead replied that technically he was correct, the only difference being that a Soviet chargé would not be received by the King.[81] At this point the other ministers filed in for the Cabinet meeting which Baldwin had described as potentially "historic."[82]

In the event, the discussion was quite unexceptional. Lloyd George merely repeated that recognition would increase trade and assist the "anti-Communistic elements" in Russia. The Cabinet ordered the British delegation to follow "the general consensus" at Genoa and not to offer limited recognition unless the Russians accepted the Cannes resolutions. De jure recognition would follow a probationary period. Finally, the Conference results would be subject to parliamentary approval.[83] This meeting, however, was significant for other reasons. By compromising with the Tories in advance, Lloyd George averted a possible Cabinet

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[81] Conclusions of a Conference of Ministers, March 28, 1922, Ibid., Appendix II.

[82] Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 105.

[83] Cabinet minutes, March 28, 1922, CAB 23/29; Middlemas, ed., Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary, I, 195-97. Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 106, state erroneously that the idea of a probationary period was first advanced by Baldwin at this meeting.

rebellion. But the Tories also retreated a little: for the first time, Conservative ministers accepted explicitly the possibility of some form of recognition for the Soviets.

Addressing a packed House on April 3 the Prime Minister described his policy as "cautious" and "moderate." He asked skeptical M.P.'s to realize that Russian participation was essential to a trade revival. Europe now had a unique opportunity to reconstruct "the greatest undeveloped country in the world." To demonstrate that Russia had abandoned Communism and would endorse the Cannes proposals, he quoted from Lenin's recent speeches. In concluding he warned that Europe might experience another holocaust if Genoa failed.[84]

Labour spokesman J. R. Clynes opposed the government because their "circumscribed" policy did not affect the root causes of European unrest.[85] Tory backbenchers offered differing opinions. John Gretton, representing the right wing, attacked the Prime Minister as vehemently as he denounced Russia. He called the Conference a thinly disguised political subterfuge which threatened to split the West. Lord Robert Cecil, in contrast, scored the Prime Minister for not extending full recognition to Russia immediately.[86]

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[84] Debates, CLII (April 3, 1922), cols. 1891-1904.

[85] Ibid., cols. 1905-19.

[86] Ibid., cols. 1919-28, 1947-52.

A majority of Conservatives probably concurred with the temperate remarks of Samuel Hoare and Bonar Law. Hoare reasoned that the Bolsheviks would be on trial at Genoa. If they had changed, "so much the better"; if not, their incorrigibility would be displayed before the world. Bonar Law, in his first parliamentary speech since illness had forced his retirement the previous year, supported the Prime Minister because the strict instructions to the British delegation would prevent any secret machinations. He believed that Lloyd George was not staging the Conference for political purposes because Genoa was a "dark and doubtful venture." Although fearing that the Bolsheviks had not reformed, Law was willing to give them a hearing.[87] In summarizing for the government Austen Chamberlain stressed that trade with other East European nations could be increased even if the Russian aspect of Genoa failed.[88]

The motion supporting the government passed easily by a vote of 372 to 94, but 23 Conservatives marched into the Opposition lobby. Political pundits had estimated earlier that 50 to 60 Unionists would support Churchill if he opposed the motion.[89] Law's masterful speech perhaps

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[87] Ibid., cols. 1953-58, 1934-41.

[88] Ibid., cols. 1981-88.

[89] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 70.

changed some minds. With one exception, these 23 Conservatives supported the later Carlton Club motion to abandon the Coalition.[90] However, such dissenters as Lord Robert Cecil, Oswald Mosley, and Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland were neither "ultras" nor "rightists."

"Ultra" Tory publications were not converted by the vote: the Morning Post and the National Review wondered how Conservative Coalitionists could swallow Lloyd George's "fairy tales." However, the Saturday Review and the Cardiff Western Mail were reassured by the probationary period. The Daily Telegraph now was only dubious: "There is about as much likelihood of the Soviet Government ever acquiring a just claim to recognition as there is of the Ethiopian changing his skin." Although offering "intellectual assent" to Genoa, the Spectator feared Lloyd George would sidestep the limitations on recognition if he saw a political advantage; it, too, was amazed that no minister had stood up to the "Autocrat of the Cabinet."[91] But other journals congratulated the Cabinet for forcing Lloyd George

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[90] For a list of the voting at the Carlton Club, see James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, pp. 129-33.

[91] Morning Post, April 4, 1922, p. 6; National Review, LXXIX (May, 1922), 330-37; Saturday Review, CXXXIII (March 4, 1922), 221; Western Mail, April 4, 1922, p. 5; Daily Telegraph, April 4, 1922, p.10; Spectator, CXXVIII (April 8, 1922), 420-21.

to drop his scheme for unconditional recognition.[92]

It is difficult to prove either contention. Circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that the Prime Minister was bent on recognition, but Tory opposition, inside the government and out, forced him to back down. Unlike his previous encounters with the Cabinet, Lloyd George now submitted to their restrictions without much struggle. His conduct mirrored a malaise that had overtaken the Coalition. The Prime Minister's confidants believed he was "losing his punch and grip" and intimated that most ministers had lost confidence in his ability to govern.[93] Lloyd George perhaps realized the futility of trying to convert the Cabinet to his point of view on Russia.

Thirty-four nations were represented when the Genoa Conference opened on April 10. The British delegation was headed by the Prime Minister, Laming Worthington-Evans, Robert Horne, and Philip Lloyd-Greame. Lord Curzon had become ill and remained in London. Chicherin and Krassin led the Soviet delegation. The Conference was divided into four commissions: Russia, international finance, transport, and economics.[94]

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[92] Daily Mail, March 29, 1922, p. 9; The Times, March 29, 1922, p. 12.

[93] Middlemas, ed., Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary, I, 197.

[94] The Genoa Conference has not been served well by

During the first two weeks the Allies and the Soviets wrangled inconclusively over such crucial questions as Tsarist state and municipal debts and confiscated private property. Russia presented the Allies with a £4 billion bill for damages they allegedly had caused through intervention. The Allies disallowed the claim but were willing to scale down Tsarist state debts if the Soviets recognized the claims of foreign nationals. Lloyd-Greame summarized the mood concisely, "We are at arm's length."[95]

The gap widened on April 16 when Russia and Germany signed a treaty of friendship at Rapallo. The pact had long been predicted but, nonetheless, the announcement took the Allies by surprise.[96] According to the terms made public, the outcast Powers renounced their financial claims against each other. The secret clauses provided for mutual military assistance.

In response The Times, the Daily Mail, and the Morning Post resurrected the latent Tory fear of Bolshevik subservience to German militarism. They blamed Lloyd George as much as the two signatories. According to the Daily Mail, "The Prime Minister was warned that, if he fraternised with

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historians. For a general account, see J. Saxon Mills, The Genoa Conference (London, 1922).

[95] Lloyd-Greame to Baldwin, n.d., cited by Swinton, I Remember, p. 20.

[96] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

the Bolshevik rogues and criminals, he must expect to have his pockets picked."[97] Other Conservative papers reacted less harshly. The Spectator felt the mutual debt cancellation would stimulate world trade. The Observer questioned only the timing of the announcement. The Saturday Review reasoned that it would revive Russo-German trade and thereby increase Britain's chances of "getting our reparations paid and of doing business ourselves."[98] Tory politicians offered the same mixed response. Lord Channing, a "rightist," was restrained in his remarks. Samuel Hoare believed it could strengthen the peace, but Lord Robert Cecil called it an unfortunate reversion to the prewar alliance system.[99] Considering Rapallo's potentially disastrous consequences for the Versailles settlement, the general Tory reaction was surprisingly mild.

After the Rapallo interlude the Allies presented their final offer to the Soviets. It invited them to participate in a new international consortium whose initial capital of £ 20 million was to be used for European

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[97] The Times, April 18, 1922, p. 13; Daily Mail, April 19, 1922, p. 6; Morning Post, April 18, p. 6, May 28, 1922, p. 8.

[98] Spectator, CXXVIII (April 22, 1922), 481, 486-87; Observer, April 23, 1922, p. 12; Saturday Review, CXXXIII (April 22, 1922), 405.

[99] The Times, April 29, p. 11, May 1, p. 10, May 2, 1922, p. 8.

reconstruction and development. Britain also would include Russia in the Trade Facilities Act, which guaranteed advances of money for the carrying out of contracts by British firms abroad. To sweeten the offer the Allies pledged to reduce the total Tsarist state debt and dropped their previous demand for extraterritorial rights for foreigners trading in Russia. An arbitration commission was to evaluate all contested private claims against Russia; the Soviets were offered one seat on the proposed five-member board. In return the Soviets were asked to refrain from subversive activities and propaganda abroad; recognize Tsarist debts and obligations to foreigners; restore, compensate, or offer concessions to all foreign nationals for confiscated property or goods; and abandon their counterclaims.[100]

The Soviet reply of May 11 defended debt repudiation and sidestepped the propaganda issue, but they were willing to recognize their debts in return for a substantial loan. They asked for a "mixed commission of experts" to discuss claims and credits at a later date.[101] Lloyd George convinced the Allies to meet with the Soviets again at The Hague in June. At the last meeting of the Conference on May 19, each delegation signed a four-month peace pact.[102]

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[100] M. Schanzer (Italian Foreign Minister) to Chicherin, May 3, 1922, copy in FO 371/8189.

[101] Mills, The Genoa Conference, pp. 401-15.

[102] Ibid., pp. 208-27.

Most Conservative journals criticized the Allied offer of May 3. The Saturday Review, a former Conference supporter, expressed anger:

> It is monstrous that we should contemplate advancing money to a Government which has been conspicuous for its financial shortcomings. We have no more assurance of its being put to any better use than the other finances of which Russia has had the disposal.

Other journals agreed with the Spectator's earlier contention that the Soviets were trying to make the proceedings as "farcical" as those at Brest-Litovsk.[103]

Some Tory politicians also were distraught. Philip Lloyd-Greame's threatened resignation from the Delegation was withdrawn only after a heated exchange with the Prime Minister.[104] Convinced of Russian insincerity, Austen Chamberlain feared that Lloyd George would offer unconditional recognition and credits, which neither the ministers nor Commons would ratify. He even reminded the Prime Minister of the Cabinet restrictions.[105] When Curzon

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[103] Saturday Review, CXXXIII (May 13, 1922), 402; Spectator, CXXVIII (April 29, 1922), 514. See also Daily Mail, April 26, 1922, p. 8; Western Mail, April 27, 1922, p. 5; The Times, May 13, 1922, p. 15; and Daily Telegraph, May 11, 1922, p. 10. The Times, May 13, 1922, p.18, reported that City businessmen also were disheartened. Only the Observer, May 14, 1922, p. 12, defended the Soviet reply.

[104] Lord Swinton, Sixty Years of Power (London, 1966). p. 50.

[105] Chamberlain to Curzon, May 15, 1922, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 23/6/40.

learned of the plan to extend negotiations, he denounced any dealings with that "whole rascally crew" until their machinations in India ceased.[106]

Genoa strained at least one friendship. Lord Birkenhead was called to the Conference several times, and after one meeting with Lloyd George he publicly implied a need for unconditional recognition.[107] Winston Churchill begged his friend instead to recommend British credits for the Empire and to uphold the Cabinet restrictions. If he did, "You may yet extricate yourself and what is more important this country from the entanglement into which she has been led by the personal views of one man."[108]

After returning to Britain Lloyd George reviewed the results of the Conference for Commons. Although Genoa

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[106]Curzon to Chamberlain, May 13, 1922, Ibid., AC 23/6/33. See also Curzon to Lady Curzon, May 16, 1922, cited by Marquess of Zetland, The Life of Lord Curzon (New York, 1928), III, 297-98.

[107]Mills, The Genoa Conference, pp. 38-39.

[108]Churchill to Birkenhead, May 1, 1922, cited by Earl of Birkenhead, The Life of Lord Birkenhead by His Son, II (London, 1935), pp. 171-74. See also Churchill to Austen Chamberlain, May 13, 1922, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 23/6/38. It has long been assumed that Birkenhead was of one mind with Churchill over the Russian question during the Coalition years. However, evidence indicates that he was probably closer to the Prime Minister's view. In 1923 Birkenhead wrote, "I was never able to share the sanguineness with which he [Churchill] surveyed each new attempt to dislodge the Soviet murderers"; see Lord Birkenhead, Contemporary Personalities (London, 1924), pp. 121-22.

helped to improve international finance, he conceded that discussions with Soviet delegates had produced nothing tangible. Russia would not be helped until she recognized her private debts. But he was optimistic about The Hague meeting where, he predicted, Allied and Soviet "experts" would arrange the restoration of foreign-owned property through Soviet concessions.[109] Only one Tory backbencher defended Genoa. Sir Arthur Shirley Benn, president of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and an unofficial government advisor, thought that the Conference had reduced European tensions. But he, too, advised that Britain would never accept debt repudiation.[110]

Dissident Conservatives offered numerous objections. Speaking for a small band of "ultras," R. S. Gwynne moved a vote of censure, arguing that the Bolsheviks had shown by Rapallo their intent to split the Allies. He accused the Prime Minister of staging The Hague meeting to mask the Genoa failure. Picturing Russia as Labour's "bee in the bonnet," Martin Archer-Shee denounced their plan to settle debts after establishing relations: Soviet bankruptcy alone negated Labour's contention that increased trade would reduce domestic unemployment.[111]

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[109] Debates, CLIV (May 25, 1922), cols. 1449-68.

[110] Ibid., cols. 1481-84.

[111] Ibid., cols. 1484-91, 1526-30.

Other Tories were more restrained. After scrutinizing the Russian problem Lord Robert Cecil announced with unintentional understatement that the Allies and Soviets had reached an impasse. He desired to readmit Russia to the European community but predicted failure at The Hague. Frederick Wise believed the Allied overtures to Russia were premature: after a longer exposure to the NEP policy the Soviets might be more amenable.[112]

In reply for the government Worthington-Evans sympathized with the objections of his fellow Conservatives. He reiterated the Prime Minister's strong stand on the debt problem, assuring that there would be no government loans even if Soviet debts were settled. Russia could expect only the benefits of the Trade Facilities Act. Significantly, he did not attempt to defend The Hague Conference.[113] With Labour abstaining, Gwynne's motion was defeated by a vote of 235 to 26. Conservatives who voted against the government on April 3 did so again, but the vast majority of Tories remained loyal, albeit reluctantly. If the tally is indicative, Lloyd George's dramatic bid to rejuvenate the Coalition had resulted in a stand off.

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[112] Ibid., cols. 1492-1503, 1515-18.

[113] Ibid., cols. 1552-60. Worthington-Evans and Lloyd-Greame, Lloyd George's chief deputies at Genoa, scarcely concealed their aversion to the Soviets' conduct there. For their views, see Home and Politics, N.S. No. 15 (1922), 3-4, and The Times, June 14, 1922, p. 17.

The Times spoke for many Tory papers when it decreed, "Reconciliation between them [the Bolsheviks] and the doctrines of civilized mankind is impossible." Most former press supporters of Genoa conceded that the Bolsheviks had not reformed.[114] Only the Observer believed Genoa was the "saving event in the life of the world": the Allies now realized they could not ignore the Bolsheviks. Unlike his fellow journalists Garvin claimed success would come at The Hague.[115]

The Hague Conference

For a time The Hague Conference appeared to be stillborn. At Genoa France and Belgium had disagreed with Lloyd George's plan to allow the Soviets to compensate or offer concessions to foreigners in lieu of full restitution. France revived her objections in June but finally consented to participate at The Hague to avoid an open split. Poincaré held little hope for success.[116]

The equally pessimistic Tory view soon hardened into overt hostility. In May Soviet authorities arrested

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[114] The Times, May 16, 1922, p. 17; Western Mail, May 26, 1922, p. 6; Spectator, CXXVIII (May 27, 1922), 642; Daily Telegraph, May 17, 1922, p. 10.

[115] Observer, May 21, 1922, p. 12.

[116] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 87-88.

Tikhon, Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, allegedly for refusing to surrender church treasures. Tory papers and politicians led a vociferous protest in Britain. Although Conservatives generally had ignored Soviet religious policy, they now described the privations suffered by all Russian believers, perhaps with the ulterior motive of undermining Soviet credibility at The Hague.[117]

Despite Lloyd George's seeming optimism over The Hague, he appointed only a small delegation headed by Lloyd-Greame and Liberal Sir Edward Hilton Young, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. The Soviets responded by naming Litvinov and Krassin. Before departing, Lloyd-Greame assured a heavily Conservative audience that the Soviets would not receive economic assistance until they provided "confidence, security, and freedom" for Western traders.[118]

The Conference formally opened on June 24 with twenty-seven nations represented. Two commissions conducted all business. A non-Russian commission composed of Western delegates was divided into three subcommissions--private property, credits, and debts. Soviet delegates made up the

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[117] Representative comments by the press and the politicians can be found in The Times, June 9, p. 15, June 22, 1922, p. 17; Morning Post, May 24, 1922, p. 8; Spectator, CXXVIII (June 17, 1922), 738; National Review, LXXIX (June, 1922), 480; and Lords Debates, L (May 25, 1922), cols. 771-86.

[118] The Times, June 14, 1922, p. 17.

Russian commission which faced the Allied subcommissions. The two sides argued inconclusively for weeks, both adhering rigidly to positions taken at Genoa.[119] In early July the gulf widened when Lloyd-Greame ruled out compensation for creditors through concessions (a plan which the Soviets seemed to dislike the least) and insisted that they restore property whenever possible or remunerate the owners. Britain probably agreed to this strong Franco-Belgian stand to gain their support in the developing Turkish crisis. Despite the setback Litvinov announced that in exchange for substantial credits the Soviets would agree in principle to compensate property owners: previously, they had denied the legality of compensation. And instead of direct governmental loans they would be satisfied with government-guaranteed credits from private Western sources. But the non-Russian commission scoffed. Anxious to end the fruitless negotiations, Lloyd-Greame called for a final session on July 20. On July 19 Krassin asked Lloyd-Greame to enumerate the Allies' terms for a resumption of talks. The British delegate then drew up a statement which he felt the

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[119] The Hague Conference is in need of a close scholarly examination. This discussion of the proceedings is based on Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 355-67; Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, III, 428-30; and Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 90-96. The Allies dropped their International Reconstruction Fund project and in its place substituted credit from private sources.

Russian should accept. Krassin agreed to recommend it to his government. At the last session Litvinov read it aloud:

> If the other delegations represented at The Hague agree to refer the proposal at the same time to their Governments, the Russian Delegation will at once refer to the Russian Government the question whether the Russian Government is prepared, assuming that credits to the Russian Government in the sense intended by the Russian Delegation cannot be given
> (1) to acknowledge the debts due by the Russian Government or its predecessors to foreign nationals; and
> (2) to agree to give effective compensation to foreigners for property previously owned by them which has been nationalised by the Russian Government; provided that terms of payment of the debts and terms of compensation, whether in the form of concession of properties or otherwise, be left to be agreed between the Russian Government and the persons concerned, in the course of two years.[120]

If the qualifications are overlooked momentarily, the announcement greatly modified the Soviet position. The non-Russian commission felt it created a favorable atmosphere for further discussions. The Hague Conference then closed on this seemingly optimistic note.[121]

Leftist historians have argued that the Allies dismissed the Soviet offer by adjourning the Conference.[122] However, Lloyd-Greame had authored the Soviet statement, which was merely a proposal to their government and not an

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[120] Swinton, I Remember, p. 25. For the verbatim account of the proposal, see Debates, CLVII (July 26, 1922), col. 501.

[121] Debates, CLVII (July 26, 1922), cols. 502-3.

[122] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 362-63; Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 95-96.

acceptance; and the final session already had been fixed. The Soviet delegation probably adopted Lloyd-Greame's words to cover up the failure. Likewise, the British delegation could return home with something.[123]

In Commons on July 26 Lloyd-Greame claimed that the Soviet statement offered a "real hope of concrete results."[124] Later in the debate Lloyd George delivered his last speech on Russia as Prime Minister. The closing event at The Hague, he exclaimed, showed that conference diplomacy was working. The Soviets now realized that unless they opened the door to "Western brains, the Western trader, and Western skill," Russia "will be reduced to something like primeval conditions." He also attacked the Labour party's Russian policy: "If you sent out the best Ambassador we possess, he would not be followed by a single banker or trader until the necessary conditions were established." And a peacetime government loan was unprecedented in British history. In sum, Labour was misleading the Soviets.[125] Perhaps heartened by this forceful speech, several Tory backbenchers defended the government.[126] But two offered different

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[123] Swinton, I Remember, p. 25.

[124] Debates, CLVII (July 26, 1922), cols. 491-504.

[125] Ibid., cols. 544-55. For the speech of Labour spokesman J. R. Clynes, see cols. 504-12.

[126] Ibid., cols. 524-26, 560-63.

approaches. Lord Eustace Percy criticized conference diplomacy, suggesting instead that the British Trade Delegation in Moscow could effect an Anglo-Soviet rapprochement more easily. Lord Robert Cecil again advocated immediate recognition to help break the Anglo-Soviet deadlock. More surprisingly, he defended the Soviet terms for an accord, claiming they could not be compelled to abandon their economic system. In his estimation direct trade relations were almost impossible because of the differing economic and legal systems. All he could suggest was establishing commerce with the Russian people, "somehow or other."[127]

Conservative journalists took little interest in The Hague. The few editorials spoke of "The Hague Deadlock," "Breakdown at The Hague," or "Lingering Illusions." The Russian proposal of July 19 was virtually ignored. Even the Observer maintained an unusual silence. The Times summarized the sentiments of many papers:

> We hope that there will be no further negotiations for the present and that the European Powers will maintain towards Bolshevism a united front. It is only when the delusive phantom of trust in Bolshevism finally fades away that it will be possible to deal constructively with Russia.

In less restrained language the Daily Mail claimed the

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[127] Ibid., cols. 531-33, 533-39.

Bolsheviks had demonstrated they were "just a gang of common crooks."[128]

These press statements probably reflected the dominant Tory feeling after Genoa and The Hague. Conservatives believed the Soviets had been given ample time to achieve an equitable settlement of their differences with Britain. Because Conservatives would not tolerate debt repudiation, Lloyd George was forced to take a stronger stand than he might otherwise have taken.

During the last year of the Coalition the Cabinet was blocked by the restiveness of Tory backbenchers, an increasing majority of whom wanted to dissolve the Coalition. Austen Chamberlain, Birkenhead, Horne, and other Tory ministers who sought to preserve the government had to defer to their backbenchers' demands on Russian policy or face a rebellion. In the preceding year Tory leaders had prevailed over their backbenchers on the Trade Agreement. But by 1922 Lloyd George was so feared, and even hated, by most Tory M.P.'s and journalists that the leadership felt it necessary to adopt a hard line on Russia. Viewed against this backdrop, many Tories' opinions of

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[128]The Times, July 20, 1922, p. 15; Daily Mail, July 20, 1922, p. 6. For other typical editorials on The Hague Conference, see Western Mail, June 27, 1922, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, July 13, 1922, p. 10; National Review, LXXIX (August, 1922), 809; and Morning Post, July 13, 1922, p. 8.

Russia at this time must be interpreted at least to some extent as covert attacks on the Prime Minister. The Spectator offers an extreme example. In 1920 this journal had become "conciliatory," but in 1922 it adopted the "rightist" viewpoint because of its distrust of Lloyd George. After the Coalition fell it resumed its earlier stand.

CHAPTER VI

THE CURZON TOUCH

The Tories Take Office

On October 19, 1922 a majority of the Tory membership of Commons meeting at the Carlton Club voted to abandon the Coalition. Lloyd George's Russian policy was only one of the many factors influencing the decision. Although most anti-Soviet backbenchers sided with the majority, a number of notable "rightists," including Carlyon Bellairs, Halford Mackinder, Claude Lowther, and William Bull, supported the Coalition.[1]

Russia was not a contentious issue during the general election held in December. Tory leaders were reticent, and the press alluded to Russia only when denouncing Labour's alleged Bolshevism.[2] The National Unionist Association's literature did likewise: one typical piece urged the electorate to "bang the door on Bolshevism by voting Unionist."[3] In reviewing Anglo-Soviet relations the encyclopedic Tory Campaign Guide criticized Labour more than

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[1] For a list of the voting, see James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, pp. 130-33.

[2] E.g., Daily Mail, Nov. 15, 1922, p. 8, and The Times, Nov. 22, 1922, p. 11.

[3] SOS: Labour Party's Appeal to Bolshies (London, 1922), pamphlet no. 2123. See also Russia's Object-Lesson in Socialism (London, 1922), pamphlet no. 2054.

the Soviets.[4]

The Tories were returned with a comfortable majority. Prime Minister Bonar Law's Cabinet included only two "rightists," Lords Salisbury and Curzon. Continuing as Foreign Secretary, Curzon now emerged out of the shadows where he had brooded while Lloyd George dominated foreign policy. On assuming his post he declared that the world's ills would be cured "not by startling dramatic strokes, not by a policy of haughty isolation, but by compromise, by cooperation, and by goodwill."[5] For a time these words seemed to apply even to Russia.

In November Curzon agreed reluctantly to limited Soviet participation in the Lausanne Conference, convened by the Allies to arrive at a peace settlement with Kemalist Turkey.[6] Curzon and Chicherin exchanged heated words during the sessions dealing with the Straits, but few Tory politicians and journals showed much interest; only the Observer had approved full Soviet participation.[7] The Soviets wanted the Straits closed to warships, but Curzon disagreed. By skillfully mixing threats with concessions

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[4]The Campaign Guide, 1922 (London, 1922), pp. 248-67.

[5]The Times, Oct. 24, 1922, p. 18.

[6]This synopsis of Lausanne is based on Northedge, The Troubled Giant, pp. 206-7.

[7]Observer, Oct. 22, 1922, p. 12. For a representative dissenting view, see The Times, Nov. 28, 1922, p. 13.

he forced the Soviets to capitulate. Curzon called it a "victory," but Chicherin had matched him in their verbal bouts. More significantly, the Soviets had signed their first international treaty.

The return of the Tories to power did not affect the Anglo-Soviet stalemate. In December Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ronald McNeill echoed the Coalition's policy when he explained that the government desired increased trade and Russian participation in world affairs. Soviet actions, however, contradicted their conciliatory words. As a case in point, he noted their refusal to ratify an agreement to return the prewar concessions of British-owned Russo-Asiatic Consolidated.[8] In private, government officials hoped to ignore the Soviets until they accepted The Hague conditions.[9]

During question time in several Commons sessions, some "ultra" M.P.'s urged the government to cancel the Trade Agreement. Cuthbert James and others thought it "intolerable" that a Conservative government would maintain relations with a band of criminals.[10] And yet the issue was not raised

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[8] The Times, Dec. 21, 1922, p. 9. This large firm had held numerous goldmining and timbering concessions in Tsarist Russia.

[9] J. D. Gregory (head of the Northern Department at the Foreign Office) to Law, Jan. 24, 1923, FO 371/9347.

[10] The Times, Dec. 9, 1922, p. 11. Other Tories showed

during the Annual Conservative Conference.

A few Tories recommended the opposite policy. Sir Allan Smith, leader of the parliamentary Industrial Group, asked Law to facilitate Russian trade for the sake of the unemployed.[11] For a time the government did not move in either direction. Then in the spring of 1923 the deadlock ended.

The Ultimatum

In late March Cardinal Cieplak, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Petrograd, and his aide, Monsignor Butkevich, were sentenced to death by a Soviet court for treasonous activities. The verdict produced an uproar in the West. The Archbishop of Canterbury decried the Soviet campaign to exterminate Christianity. Lord Sydenham was repulsed by this "most horrible crime in all history."[12] The Daily Mail believed such "hideous" religious persecution proved

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their disdain by introducing bills to curb "seditious" (Communist) propaganda and teaching, but none passed; e.g., Debates, CLXII (March 27, 1923), cols. 273-78.

[11] Smith to Law, Dec. 14, 1922, Bonar Law Papers, 112/40/1. The Industrial Group was an informal, bipartisan organization of M.P.'s interested in industrial and commercial questions. A number of Tories were leading members.

[12] Lords Debates, LIII (March 20, 1923), cols. 454-58, 459-60. See also Birkenhead's condemnation in his Contemporary Personalities, p.122.

the Soviet system was "politically organised" crime.[13] The Morning Post urged Curzon to dismiss "the mission of Bolshevist spies and propagandists which now pollute our capital." Although Garvin also criticized Soviet "folly," he felt the trials showed the need for a diplomatic link because "we are reduced to ridiculous impotence when a crisis arises."[14]

Curzon directed the British agent in Moscow, Robert Hodgson, to ask for a stay of execution. Other governments did likewise.[15] The Soviet reply, received the very next day, branded the British request as an intrusion in their domestic affairs and also assailed Britain's alleged assassination of political prisoners in Ireland, India, and Egypt. It was signed by Gregory Weinstein, a minor bureaucrat.[16] Hodgson refused to accept the note; several days later he received a similar

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[13] Daily Mail, April 6, 1923, p. 7. See also Daily Telegraph, March 28, 1923, p. 8, and The Times, March 28, 1923, p. 13.

[14] Morning Post, April 9, 1923, p. 6; Observer, April 1, p. 10, April 8, 1923, p. 14.

[15] Hodgson to Chicherin, March 30, 1923, Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 2, 1923), Cmnd. 1869, "Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government Respecting the Relations between the Two Governments," (London, 1923), p. 1.

[16] Weinstein to Hodgson, March 31, 1923, Ibid., pp. 2-3.

one.[17] Cieplak's sentence was reduced to ten years in prison, but Butkevich was shot; and preparations continued for the upcoming trial of Patriarch Tikhon.

In response Curzon considered abrogating the Trade Agreement. Several other developments also disturbed him: the Soviets continued their propaganda in the Near East, and they had been harassing British trawlers within Russia's self-proclaimed twelve-mile international limit in the Arctic Ocean.[18] Curzon asked his subordinates for their thoughts.[19] From Moscow Hodgson wrote that a break would increase the power of Soviet extremists, precipitate a return of terror, exclude Britons from Russia's economic recovery, and deprive Britain of her listening post and a moderating influence inside Russia. Hodgson, however, would attempt to convince Chicherin that the threat to abrogate the Trade Agreement was not an idle one.[20] J. D. Gregory, head of the Northern Department at the Foreign Office, also cautioned against hasty action since the government soon would be confronted with demands by the

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[17] Weinstein to Hodgson, April 4, 1923, Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[18] For the trawler issue, see Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 442-43.

[19] Curzon to Hodgson, April 9, 1923, Bonar Law Papers, 111/12/66.

[20] Hodgson to Curzon, April 13, 1923, FO 371/9365.

Opposition to renew the trade ties. Cancellation was a single usage weapon which should be reserved until it would damage the Soviets, and "that moment has obviously not arrived." Gregory urged a continuation of Curzon's policy, "The Bolshevists hate being cold-shouldered even more than being openly abused or attacked."[21] Sir Eyre Crowe, the Permanent Under-Secretary, agreed with Gregory.[22] The Department of Overseas Trade feared a reduction of trade.[23] A junior member of the Foreign Office, William O'Malley, suggested an ultimatum: "The fact that we had not acted precipitately but had given the Bolsheviks an opportunity to retreat would be to our advantage."[24] Curzon followed O'Malley's advice.

After the publication of Weinstein's notes Tory papers also weighed the merits of a break. Some called for the ouster of the Russian Trade Delegation.[25] But an equal number disagreed.[26] Reversing its previous stand the

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[21] Minute by Gregory, March 31, 1923, FO 371/9341.

[22] Minute by Crowe, March 31, 1923, Ibid.

[23] Memorandum by the Overseas Trade Department, April 17, 1923, FO 371/9365.

[24] Minute by O'Malley, April 11, 1923, Ibid.

[25] The Times, April 24, 1923, p.15; Morning Post, April 19, 1923, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, April 14, 1923, p. 8; Daily Mail, April 13, 1923, p. 7. In the Daily Mail, April 14, 1923, p. 5, Lord Sydenham agreed.

[26] Spectator, CXXX (April 14, 1923), 615; Saturday

influential Association of British Creditors of Russia now found that the Trade Agreement did not serve any "useful purpose."[27] The Russian section of the London Chamber of Commerce concurred.[28]

The Soviets scorned the agitation in Britain. Propagandist Karl Radek recalled sarcastically how several English monarchs had executed their Archbishops of Canterbury and described the Foreign Under-Secretary as "not worth a farthing." He and other leaders challenged Britain to abrogate the Trade Agreement, claiming her perilous economy needed the Russian market.[29]

Labourites saw matters differently from Radek. On March 29 several Opposition backbenchers accused the government of ostracizing Russia, noting that this was the first

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Review, CXXXV (April 21, 1923), 527; Observer, May 6, 1923, p. 13; Daily Express, April 10, 1923, cited by William P. Coates, Religion in Tsarist and Soviet Russia (London, 1930), p. 14.

[27] Leslie Urquhart (chairman) to R. McNeill, April 10, 1923, FO 371/9365. Founded in 1921 to lobby for the creditors, the Association included a number of Tories in its leadership. In 1928 eight backbenchers and one peer sat on its Advisory Council, and Oliver Locker-Lampson, M.P. was a member of its Executive Committee; see Richard R. Tweed (chairman) to the Foreign Office, May 31, 1928, FO 371/13313. For an early statement of its goals, see F. C. Savage (secretary) to Cecil Harmsworth, M.P., Nov. 29, 1921, FO 371/6875.

[28] London Chamber of Commerce to McNeill, April 10, 1923, FO 371/9365.

[29] Hodgson to Curzon, April 17, 1923, Ibid.; Russian Information and Review, II (April 21, 1923), 435.

discussion of Russia in the new parliament. McNeill's heated denunciation of Soviet religious policy underscored the government's growing irritation.[30] Such official comments led Labour to conclude that Tory protests were preparing the public for a break.[31] Labour leader Arthur Henderson wrote anxiously to the Prime Minister, who replied that "if we should be forced to take action," Commons could pass judgment.[32]

On April 25 Curzon first brought the Russian question to the Cabinet's attention when he announced the seizure of a British trawler off Murmansk. His colleagues approved a draft protest enumerating Britain's complaints--trawlers, propaganda, and the Weinstein notes. If an acceptable reply was not given shortly, "our present de facto relations would be severed."[33]

A week later the Foreign Secretary presented a wide-ranging ultimatum in which he quoted from intercepted Soviet diplomatic correspondence to document such "pernicious" activities as Soviet arms shipments and Comintern

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[30]For the speeches of E. D. Morel and C. P. Trevelyan, and McNeill's reply, see Debates, CLXII (March 29, 1923), cols. 822-29, 830-32, 841-48.

[31]E.g., the remarks of Labourite Charles Buxton in Ibid., CLXIII (April 26, 1923), col. 664.

[32]Henderson to Law, April 14, 1923, Cambridge, The University Library, Stanley Baldwin Papers, vol. 114, p. 72.

[33]Cabinet minutes, April 25, 1923, CAB 23/45.

subsidies for revolutionaries in India, Afghanistan, and Persia. He demanded the dismissal of Soviet diplomats in Kabul and Teheran, the withdrawal of Weinstein's notes, and guarantees against future harassment of British trawlers outside the three-mile limit. Finally, he requested compensation for two British subjects allegedly mistreated by the Soviets. Russia was given ten days to comply.[34] The Cabinet altered just a few minor points in the draft.[35]

Only one minister's reaction is known. Lloyd-Greame, President of the Board of Trade, wrote that because recent attempts to settle debts had failed, "Firm action . . . is probably the only way of bringing the Russian Government to their senses." Moreover, "We have obtained little or no benefit from the Trade Agreement." Its abrogation would not reduce Russian imports, "If it pays them to import into the country, they will continue to do so, either directly or indirectly."[36]

The Soviets received the note on May 9, and the press published it the next day. The Times' lobby correspondent reported that most Tory M.P.'s were pleased.[37] Almost all

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[34]For the text of the published note, see Curzon to Chicherin, May 2, 1923, "Correspondence Respecting the Relations between the Two Governments," pp. 5-13.

[35]Cabinet minutes, May 2, 1923, CAB 23/45.

[36]Lloyd-Greame to Curzon, May 1, 1923, FO 371/9365.

[37]The Times, May 10, 1923, p. 14. The majority of

Tory papers responded favorably. The Morning Post, The Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Western Mail, and the Daily Mail applauded the forthright exposition of Britain's complaints. Anticipating a Soviet rejection, they agreed that cancellation of the Agreement would improve relations by ending the hypocrisy of dealing with the criminal camarilla.[38] Reversing their earlier positions the Spectator and the Saturday Review now claimed that continued silence would be misconstrued as acquiescence in Soviet intrigues. Time and Tide straddled the fence.[39]

Garvin, however, accused Curzon of having dealt an "irreparable blow" to the country's economy by "cutting off our own nose to spite our face." His ultimatum method, the "worst kind of diplomatic procedure," invited a rejection: "Unless we are mad our object in our controversies with Moscow . . . must be settlement, not rupture." Indeed,

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commercial and industrial interests felt the government had no alternative. For a listing of favorable responses, see Foreign Office minute, May 8, 1923, FO 371/9367. For a dissenting view, see Leslie Scott, M.P., to Curzon, May 15, 1923, FO 371/9366. See also the approval of the Association of British Creditors of Russia in The Times, May 10, 1923, p. 16.

[38] Morning Post, May 9, 1923, p. 8; The Times, May 15, 1923, p. 15; Daily Telegraph, May 10, 1923, p. 10; Western Mail, May 10, 1923, p. 6; Daily Mail, May 11, 1923, p. 8.

[39] Spectator, CXXX (May 12, 1923), 786; Saturday Review, CXXXV (May 12, 1923), 623; Time and Tide, IV (May 18, 1923), 510.

Curzon "had never been notable for foresight."[40] Garvin's polemic was not well-received by fellow Tories: an anonymous writer in the English Review denounced him and "his Bolshevist friends."[41]

The Soviets reacted characteristically, charging that the note was a pretext to reimpose the blockade or renew military intervention.[42] British leaders denied the allegation.[43] But for many reasons the Soviets feared a break: Lenin was incapacitated; Germany seemed about to collapse under the Ruhr invasion; Poland and Rumania might launch an invasion; and the loss of the British market might harm the NEP. In private, some Soviet leaders disavowed the discourteous Weinstein notes and doubted the legality of their unilateral twelve-mile territorial limit.[44] The Soviet reply, received by Hodgson on May 13, cited

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[40] Observer, May 13, 1923, p. 12.

[41] English Review, XXXVI (June, 1923), 608-13.

[42] For representative Soviet comments, see Observer, May 13, 1923, p. 13, and Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, pp. 187-89. In A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 109-11, Coates makes a typical left-wing attempt to show that Britain planned war. A reading of his evidence indicates why the claim does not even require a rebuttal.

[43] E.g., the speech by Leopold Amery (First Lord of the Admiralty) in Observer, May 13, 1923, p. 13.

[44] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, I, 444-45; Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, p. 146.

allegedly hostile British activities in Russia and Asia. But they agreed to withdraw the Weinstein notes, compensate the two Britons, submit the seaboard dispute to an international conference, and meet to settle the remaining differences.[45] Krassin flew to London the next day.

Tory newspapers gave the note a mixed reception. The Morning Post and the Daily Mail termed it an insult, but the Observer offered praise. The Saturday Review and the Spectator did not know what to think, both awaiting a lead from the government.[46]

On May 15 Labour sponsored the only debate on Russia during the life of this parliament. A parade of Opposition leaders condemned the note. Ramsay MacDonald felt a conference would have been preferable to the Foreign Secretary's "pompous" approach. If the Trade Agreement was torn up, Britain would lose needed trade and "a state of incipient war will be created."[47] Two distinct viewpoints can be

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[45] Litvinov to Curzon, May 11, 1923, Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 3, 1923), Cmnd. 1874, "Reply of the Soviet Government to His Majesty's Government Respecting the Relations between the Two Governments," (London, 1923), pp. 2-8.

[46] Morning Post, May 16, 1923, p. 9; Daily Mail, May 15, 1923, p. 8; Observer, May 20, 1923, p. 12; Saturday Review, CXXXV (May 19, 1923), 656; Spectator, CXXX (May 19, 1923), 834.

[47] Debates, CLXIV (May 15, 1923), cols. 281-99. For similar speeches by Liberals Lloyd George and H. H. Asquith, see cols. 319-26.

discerned from Tory backbenchers' speeches. Reginald Banks and Martin Archer-Shee demanded that the Soviets comply with Curzon's demands or lose the Agreement.[48] Sir Allan Smith hoped to preserve the Agreement because of its commercial benefits. Like MacDonald he believed the ultimatum had resulted in "a state of war."[49] Under-Secretary Ronald McNeill rebuked these comments about a war but termed the Soviet reply "entirely unsatisfactory." Although "we have negotiated until we are sick of negotiating," he announced that Curzon was willing to meet with Krassin.[50]

On May 19 Krassin spoke with Curzon and McNeill.[51] In a note to Curzon on May 23, Krassin reiterated the concessions listed in the Soviet reply of May 13, adding that compensation would be paid to British seamen; however, he again denied violating the propaganda clause.[52] Curzon

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[48] Ibid., cols. 326-34, 341-47.

[49] Ibid., cols. 361-65.

[50] Ibid., cols. 295-319.

[51] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 117. The topics of discussion are unknown.

[52] This note and the subsequent diplomatic exchanges continuing until the final Soviet communication of June 18 can be found in Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 4,1923) Cmnd. 1890, "Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government," (London, 1923), pp. 3-18.

claimed Soviet intransigence was endangering the Trade Agreement.[53]

On May 21 Stanley Baldwin had replaced the ailing Bonar Law as Prime Minister. Like his predecessor, Baldwin gave Curzon almost a free rein in foreign affairs.[54] But the Prime Minister emphasized that "we must try to avoid a break with Russia."[55] On May 30 the Cabinet decided that the Soviets must sign a "renewed declaration on propaganda in a more specific and definite formula." Curzon should make matters "slightly easier" by allowing them to recall--instead of dismissing--their agents in Kabul and Teheran. Finally, the Soviets must repudiate their claim that compensation for the two British claimants did not imply wrongdoing.[56]

On June 4 Krassin criticized Britain's increased demands but was willing to sign a more specific propaganda pledge and to withdraw the reservation concerning the two British claimants. However, he refused to recall the diplomats in Afghanistan and Persia.

As the impasse dragged on, Tory papers divided along

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[53] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 121.

[54] Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 179.

[55] Middlemas, ed., Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary, I, 238.

[56] Cabinet minutes, May 30, 1923, CAB 23/46.

three lines. The Times, the Morning Post, and the Daily Mail wanted the boot applied to the Soviet mission. The National Review, the Spectator, and the Western Mail merely urged Curzon to stand firm.[57] Other journals requested a negotiated settlement because Russia seemed conciliatory. Garvin again was most emphatic, "To allow foreign policy to be guided by detestation of Bolshevism . . . is the straight way to catastrophe."[58] The Soviets charged that "permanent Tory hostility" had caused the crisis.[59]

Agreement finally was reached after Krassin announced that the Soviet chargé at Kabul, then in Moscow, would not return to his post. On June 11 the Cabinet interpreted this as a capitulation. (Krassin later agreed to dismiss the agent in Teheran if he engaged in anti-British activities.) At the end of the meeting Baldwin congratulated Curzon "on the highly successful issue of these difficult negotiations."[60] Curzon was elated, "I think I

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[57] The Times, May 24, 1923, p. 11; Morning Post, May 24, 1923, p. 6; Daily Mail, May 25, 1923, p. 6; National Review, LXXXI (June, 1923), 505-6; Spectator, CXXX (May 19, 1923), 838-39; Western Mail, May 24, 1923, p. 6.

[58] Observer, May 27, 1923, p. 12; Time and Tide, IV (May 25, 1923), 533; Saturday Review, CXXXV (June 2, 1923), 720; Daily Express, May 24, 1923, cited by Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 121.

[59] Russian Information and Review, II (June 2, 1923), 530.

[60] Cabinet minutes, July 11, 1923, CAB 23/46.

may claim to have won a considerable victory over the Soviet Government, and I expect them to behave with more circumspection for some time to come."[61] Virtually all Tory papers, including the Observer, hailed the settlement.[62] Only a handful of Tory politicians dissented.[63]

Tranquility

After the settlement Russia did not generate much interest among Conservatives until after Labour came to power in January, 1924. During this time several Tories worked for normalized commercial relations. Indeed, British trade desperately needed a boost. In 1922 exports and re-exports to Russia had totalled a mere £ 4.7 million. Statistics for the first six months of 1923 presaged an even lower annual figure. In these two years the Soviets accumulated a favorable trade balance of £ 8.3 million; and they continued to dangle prospects of large orders.[64]

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[61] Curzon to Lord Crewe (ambassador to France), June 13, 1923, cited by Zetland, The Life of Lord Curzon, III, 356.

[62] E.g., Observer, June 17, 1923, p. 12; The Times, June 14, 1923, p. 15; and Saturday Review, CXXXV (June 16, 1923), 795.

[63] E.g., the remarks by Sir William Davison in Debates, CLXV (June 12, 1923), col. 229, and a letter by Lord Sydenham in Spectator, CXXX (June 23, 1923), 1038-39.

[64] Russian Information and Review, III (Nov. 24, 1923), 324-26, contains a typical listing of commercial possibilities.

On July 24 the backbenchers' Industrial Group implored the Prime Minister to stimulate exports through an extension of the Exports Credits Act (or Scheme) to Russia.[65] Baldwin answered:

> The Government are not prepared to extend the scheme to Russia until the Russian Government accepts the obligations and creates the conditions that this Government and its predecessor have always insisted on as an essential pre-requisite. I may add that the imports from Russia to this country were last year of a value nearly double that of the exports from this country to Russia so that the Russian Government must have had at their disposal in this country funds sufficient for purchases considerably in excess of those they actually made.[66]

In reply Sir Allan Smith complained that the conditions for an extension of the Export Credits Scheme were vague. Moreover, he noted, the Soviets always had met all commercial obligations promptly.[67] But his plea fell mostly on deaf ears. A few Tories offered support, but others attacked

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[65] Sir Allan Smith (chairman) and Tory P. J. Hannon (secretary) to Baldwin, July 24, 1923, Daily Telegraph, July 26, 1923, p. 8. See also the pleas of Tory Alfred Davies in Debates, CLXVII (Aug. 2, 1923), cols. 1744-45. The Export Credits Scheme, enacted in 1920, set up an Export Credits Department to guarantee the payment of bills of exchange drawn by British firms on foreign buyers of British goods. If the foreigners' bills were not paid, the government guarantee went into effect. Russia was excluded from the Act by decree. The Trade Facilities Act, in contrast, advanced guaranteed funds to help British firms fulfill contracts in foreign countries.

[66] Baldwin to Smith, Aug. 3, 1923, Daily Telegraph, Aug. 14, 1923, clipping in FO 371/9350.

[67] Ibid.

him.[68]

Other Tory businessmen tried to encourage trade. In late August a delegation from Becos Traders, Limited, visited Russia. Founded ten years earlier to promote the Russian market, Becos was associated with over eighty British engineering firms. Led by F. L. Baldwin, a cousin of the Prime Minister, the delegation conferred with leading Soviet economic officials.[69] Upon returning Baldwin issued a guardedly optimistic statement:

> We were able to discuss several interesting propositions, which will probably lead to satisfactory business results; but it must be obvious that all such results will be comparatively small until a means is found of securely giving credits.[70]

A few Tory papers hailed the visit as an important first step.[71] Others ridiculed the report as illusory.[72] The Association of British Creditors of Russia believed that trade would remain stagnant without a debt settlement.[73]

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[68] For a favorable comment, see Observer, Aug. 19, 1923, p. 8. In The Times, Aug. 16, 1923, p. 13, Tory backbencher John Remer denounced Smith and other "misguided individuals."

[69] The Times, Aug. 14, 1923, p. 7.

[70] Ibid., Sept. 3, 1923, p. 3. See also the reaction of A. G. Marshall, one of the leading participants, in Ibid., Sept, 17, 1923, p. 8.

[71] Observer, Sept. 2, 1923, p. 10; Saturday Review, CXXXVI (Sept. 8, 1923), 266. The Soviets were ecstatic; see Russian Information and Review, III (Sept. 8, 1923), 146.

[72] E.g., The Times, Sept. 4, 1923, p. 11.

[73] Ibid., Sept. 15, 1923, p. 15. During an earlier

The Cabinet vetoed increased trade by tabling discussion of the topic.[74]

In the fall of 1923 Baldwin abruptly scheduled a general election. Although Labour's manifesto called for de jure recognition of Russia, Tories generally ignored the issue during the campaign.[75] After Conservatives lost the election, the first Labour government began to implement their solution to the Russian puzzle.

During the Tories' year in power, Conservatives moved toward forming a monolithic opinion of Russian policy. Although it cannot be documented, a Cabinet majority probably anticipated--and might have welcomed--a Soviet refusal to honor the Curzon ultimatum. When the unexpectedly mild reply was received, Curzon held out for full

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meeting with Ronald McNeill, representatives from the Association had asserted that a threatened cancellation of the Trade Agreement would force the Soviets to settle their debts. McNeill demurred; see Notes respecting an Interview with a Deputation from the Association of British Creditors of Russia, July 26, 1923, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Files, Confidential Prints, Russia, FO 418/60. See also the polemic against the "evil" Bolsheviks by the Association's chairman, Sir Charles Hunter, in The Nineteenth Century and After, XCIV (November, 1923), 689-95.

[74]Cabinet minutes, Oct. 22, 1923, CAB 23/46. Lloyd-Greame suggested indirectly that there was some ministerial support for a change in trade policy; see Lloyd-Greame to Baldwin, Baldwin Papers, vol. 114, pp. 80-81.

[75]For one of the few appeals to return the government because of their Russian policy, see a letter from George Buchanan in The Times, Dec. 4, 1923, p. 8.

compliance, apparently with the consent of all but the Tory "conciliators." Most Tories really were angered by the Soviet religious trials and the Weinstein notes.

An intriguing question is why Curzon did not insist on a definitive solution to the debt problem when the Soviets seemed conciliatory. Louis Fischer believes that "possibly, perhaps probably" they would have settled; he blames Curzon's pompous disdain of "crass questions of money."[76] Similarly, a Foreign Office civil servant, J. D. Gregory, recalls that if the matter had been raised, agreement might have been reached, "It was a great opportunity missed."[77] In essence, Anglo-Soviet relations might have been altered at this time.

Actually, the government had decided not to introduce the debt issue. As Ronald McNeill explained privately, it "would only have prejudiced the more limited issues" in the ultimatum. The government's information indicated the Soviets would have abandoned the Trade Agreement rather than settle debts. Compared to debt recognition, the Agreement was "of very minor importance" to them.[78] McNeill's reason-

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[76] Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, p. 148.

[77] J. D. Gregory, On the Edge of Diplomacy: Rambles and Reflections, 1902-1928 (London, 1929), pp. 142-43.

[78] Notes respecting an Interview with a Deputation from the Association of British Creditors of Russia, July 26, 1923, FO 418/60.

ing seems valid.

Tory foreign policy toward Russia was controversial--even among the Tories. Whether or not Britain's complaints should have been spelled out in an ultimatum is debatable. Curzon's "victory" was personally gratifying, but the satisfactory outcome of the crisis was due more to Soviet backpedaling than to his skill. Most important, the settlement did not lessen Anglo-Soviet tensions. One historian states correctly that it only bared "the knife-edge upon which . . . relations were balanced."[79] But it should also be remembered that relations had been tense since 1917. The Tory government, therefore, really did not affect Anglo-Soviet relations, one way or the other. This perhaps was the most significant result of their short stay in office.

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[79] P. A. Reynolds, British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War Years (London, 1954), p. 63.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANGLO-SOVIET TREATIES

The Conference

Even before the Conservative government resigned, Ramsay MacDonald had suggested extending de jure recognition to Russia prior to negotiations.[1] The Tory press response at that time was restrained, perhaps because their attention was centered on Labour's assumption of power. The Spectator and the Observer supported MacDonald.[2] The Times chided Labour for surrendering Britain's bargaining position by granting unconditional recognition. The Morning Post concluded that it would prop up the Bolsheviks who, following Lenin's recent death, were "honeycombed with dissention."[3]

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[1] The Times, Jan. 9, 1924, p. 14.

[2] Spectator, CXXXII (Jan. 12, 1924), 38; Garvin to Rakovsky, Jan. 18, 1924, cited by Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 472.

[3] The Times, Jan. 26, 1924, p. 11; Morning Post, Jan. 26, 1924, p. 6. Tory press estimates of Lenin ranged widely. Several saw him as a monster or homicidal maniac whose evil life disgraced all of mankind: see Morning Post, Jan. 23, 1924, p. 6; Daily Mail, Jan. 23, 1924, p. 4; Daily Telegraph, Jan. 23, 1924, p. 8; and National Review, LXXXII (February, 1924), 835-36. The Times, Jan. 24, 1924, p. 13, called him a very remarkable man but attributed his success to world-wide chaos. The Spectator, CXXXII (Jan. 26, 1924), 115, expressed amazement at his ability to hold Russia together, but it characterized him as a "medieval tyrant" whose passion for reactionary abstract theories blinded him to the value of human life. Garvin labeled him "the outstanding human of our time," an "enemy of the human race" who had replaced one despotism with another; see

On February 1, 1924 the Labour government formally recognized "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as the de jure rulers of those territories of the old Russian Empire which acknowledge their authority." The Soviets were invited to send a delegation to London "to draw up the preliminary basis of a complete treaty to settle all questions outstanding between the two countries." The most important issues cited were propaganda, debts, and restoration of Russian credit. Pending the appointment of an ambassador, Sir Robert Hodgson was designated as chargé d'affaires in Moscow.[4]

Tory papers reacted calmly to the announcement. Several made favorable comments.[5] Others did not pass judgment.[6] Those newspapers which did object avoided

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Observer, Jan. 27, 1924, p. 10.

Although Lenin had not been active for some time, several Tory papers and politicians predicted his death would initiate an internal crisis. As usual, British news reporters fueled speculation with reports of domestic unrest; e.g., the stories from the Riga correspondent for The Times, April 22, p. 12, May 12, 1924, p. 8. The press had only a hazy understanding of the Soviet power struggle at this time: on May 22, 1924, p. 17, The Times haltingly suggested that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin ruled as a shaky triumverate.

[4] The Times, Feb. 2, 1924, p. 10.

[5] Observer, Feb. 3, 1924, p. 13; Spectator, CXXXII (Feb. 9, 1924), 194; Time and Tide, V (Feb. 8, 1924), 122.

[6] Daily Telegraph, Feb. 5, 1924, p. 8; Daily Mail, Feb. 4, 1924, p. 8.

polemics: the Western Mail, the National Review, and the Morning Post regretted that the government did not demand prior guarantees. The Times predicted that unless the Soviets changed dramatically, "We foresee for the British Government a troublesome period of negotiations in the course of which much may happen both in Russia and in England."[7]

Commercial and financial interests were cautious. Tory George Balfour, head of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, hoped that recognition would increase Anglo-Russian trade.[8] The Federation of British Industries, the largest of the employers' organizations, told MacDonald that the Soviets must recognize their debts "without qualifications."[9] The Association of British Creditors of Russia passed a similar resolution.[10]

The Soviets anticipated settling all outstanding issues in "a friendly spirit," especially the restoration of credit. Although disappointed with MacDonald's assertion

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[7] Western Mail, Feb. 4, 1924, p. 6; National Review, LXXXII (February, 1924), 834-35; Morning Post, Feb. 2, 1924, p. 6; The Times, Feb. 2, p. 11, Feb. 9, 1924, p. 11.

[8] The Times, March 4, 1924, p. 9.

[9] Ibid., Feb. 21, 1924, p. 11. Local trade organizations did likewise; e.g., Ibid., Jan. 28, 1924, p. 17.

[10] Ibid., Feb. 9, 1924, p. 10.

that "normal conditions" would come only after the Conference, Chicherin concluded, "But let us hope for the best."[11]

In Commons on February 12 MacDonald announced that he hoped to revive trade by including Russia in the Trade Facilities Act and in the Export Credits Scheme. However, this was not to be done immediately: apparently he wanted to use them as bargaining points at the Conference. By asserting that these steps would be "quite sufficient," the Prime Minister implicitly ruled out a government loan to Russia.[12] Tory backbenchers expressed differing reactions. A. M. Samuel, a member of the Advisory Committee that lent credits under the Export Credits Scheme, admitted that £15 million for export ventures were available, but claimed that traders were securing funds from private banks. Besides, trade was virtually at a standstill. For those Labourites who claimed that the Russian market would alleviate unemployment, Samuel recalled that only £28 million in British products had been sent to Russia in 1913, and one-half of that total had been re-exports. Moreover, foreign merchants in Russia were forced to endure abominable conditions. However, William Allen, speaking for the Ulster

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[11] Rakovsky to MacDonald, Feb. 8, 1924, interview by Chicherin, Feb. 4, 1924, Soviet Documents, I, 426-27, 424-26.

[12] Debates, CLXIX (Feb. 12, 1924), col. 469; Richard W. Lyman, The First Labour Government, 1924 (London, 1957), pp. 187-88.

Unionist delegation, noted that Russian flax was needed in the languishing Irish linen industry. He wished the Prime Minister "god-speed" in reviving trade.[13]

In Commons the next day Baldwin explained that his party desired peaceful relations and increased trade with Russia. The crux of the difficulty was negotiating with a government "whose ideals are entirely opposed to our own." He questioned the timing of recognition because the present unrest in Russia meant "that before very long there may be no government with which to negotiate at all." By establishing relations before negotiations, Britain had given away "the only lever we have to obtain not only the things which we desire but which we shall be obliged to have." Any surrender on the debt question invited postponement or even cancellation of Allied debts to Britain. Soviet propaganda in Asia, "one of the gravest perils to which the world is subject," must be ended. Baldwin believed that businessmen would not trade until assured of payment and justice in Soviet commercial courts. The mere presence of a British "Ambassador, or Archimandrite, or Pope" in Moscow would not stimulate commerce. As an example he noted that Russo-German trade had not increased since 1922. Even the Trade Facilities Act and the Export Credits Scheme would be ineffectual. MacDonald nodded approval to Baldwin's assertion

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[13] Debates, CLXIX (Feb. 12, 1924), cols. 801-5, 811-13.

that "there was no question of any loan to the Russian Government, Government to Government." The Conservative leader concluded:

> I fear, indeed, and I wish I could think otherwise, that the time has not yet come when it will be possible either to enter fully into that reconciliation with Russia desired by all of us or to stimulate a trade with a country which is poverty-stricken, which cannot even yet afford to buy for itself. It must be a tender growth of years. . . .[14]

Baldwin did not press MacDonald, probably for two reasons. For several months Tories deliberately avoided criticizing the government's foreign policy.[15] And as Baldwin had stated recently, "I am not one of those . . . who believe that the great motive force of Labour is Bolshevism."[16] The extent of Baldwin's restraint becomes clearer if his parliamentary speech is compared with a memorandum written for him by Samuel Hoare. In places Baldwin repeated Hoare's analysis verbatim, but the omissions are striking. Hoare reasoned that MacDonald had been compelled by his party to offer recognition. After assuming power the Prime Minister was torn between the conflicting demands of party pressure and official responsibility. The

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[14] Ibid., (Feb. 13, 1924), cols. 851-57.

[15] The Times, May 22, 1924, p. 11.

[16] Ibid., Feb. 11, 1924, p. 9.

resulting "milk and water" recognition probably would not lessen Soviet hostility. Hoare concluded on a harsh note: "No change will take place in the situation until Russia has definitely repudiated its Bolshevik principles."[17] Before the Conference convened on April 14, most Tories had foresaken Baldwin's conciliatory tone for Hoare's abrasive analysis.

Soviet leaders soon ridiculed both the Labour party and the upcoming Conference. Trotsky characterized the Prime Minister as a "Christian Menshevik" whose bourgeois government was fraudulent.[18] Gregory Zinoviev, head of the Third International, cried that British creditors would receive a "thundering 'No'" to their "ridiculous claims." Trotsky offered a striking metaphor: "The man condemned to be hanged who slips out of the noose does not pay for the rope."[19] Krassin and Christian Rakovsky, the head of the Soviet delegation, demanded a loan of £ 150-300 million. In return they offered increased trade and liberal concessions

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[17] Memorandum by Hoare, n.d., Geoffrey Fry (Baldwin's private secretary) to Hoare, Feb. 15, 1924, Templewood Papers, Box II, File 4.

[18] The Times, April 16, 1924, p. 9; Harvey Wish, "Anglo-Soviet Relations During Labour's First Ministry (1924)," The Slavonic Review, XVII (January, 1939), 392.

[19] The Times, March 6, p. 14, April 16, 1924, p. 8.

for British firms. But they emphasized repeatedly that Russia would not abandon her counterclaims or rescind her nationalization decrees.[20]

In response to this inflammatory language, large numbers of Tories began to express serious doubts about Labour's policy. Several journals which had supported the Conference initially now feared a disaster.[21] Newspapers were filled with letters from irate Tory backbenchers.[22] The frontbench Opposition moratorium on foreign policy criticism ended on April 11 when Neville Chamberlain assailed recognition without prior guarantees for British creditors and a cessation of propaganda.[23] Lord Curzon also reprimanded MacDonald for his precipitous action. In Curzon's judgment, "A great disillusionment lies before the British Government and the British people."[24]

On the eve of the Conference a group of prominent English bankers announced that before Russian credit was

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[20] Leonid Krassin, "The Future of Soviet Trade Relations," Russian Information and Review, IV (March 29, 1924), 199-200, (April 5, 1924), 214-15; Arnold Toynbee, ed., Survey of International Affairs, 1924 (London, 1928), p. 236.

[21] English Review, XXXVIII (March, 1924), 302; Saturday Review, CXXXVII (March 8, 1924), 221.

[22] E.g., The Times, Feb. 26, p. 13, Feb. 28, 1924, p. 18.

[23] Ibid., April 12, 1924, p. 9.

[24] Lords Debates, LVI (March 26, 1924), cols. 1055-70.

restored, the Soviets would have to acknowledge all debts; provide an "equitable arrangement" for confiscated property; establish a new Civil Code, independent courts, and private contracts; guarantee private property in law; allow British traders to deal freely with "private institutions" in Russia; and abandon their foreign propaganda.[25] Rakovsky replied with a categorical, "Never."[26] Speaking for most Conservative papers The Times called the manifesto "lucid and irrefutable."[27]

When the Conference opened on April 14, Tory papers adhered to differing viewpoints. The Morning Post and the Daily Mail claimed the Soviet delegation consisted of agitators bent on negotiating a loan without acknowledging their debts: they urged an immediate dismissal of the "rogues."[28] The Daily Express, the Observer, and the Spectator, however, predicted success because both sides appeared conciliatory.[29] Other Conservative papers

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[25] The Times, April 14, 1924, p. 11.

[26] Interview with the press on April 26, Soviet Documents, I, 449-51.

[27] The Times, April 14, 1924, p. 13. Only the Observer, April 27, 1924, p. 13, objected.

[28] Morning Post, April 9, p. 8, April 12, 1924, p. 6; Daily Mail, April 16, p. 8, April 17, 1924, p. 8.

[29] Daily Express, April 11, 1924, cited by Theodore Shane, "British Reaction to the Soviet Union, 1924-1929: a Study of Policy and Public Opinion" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1953), p. 23; Observer, April 13, 1924, p. 13; Spectator, CXXXII (April 19, 1924), 628.

praised MacDonald's strong defense of British interests at the opening sessions but feared a replay of Genoa and The Hague.[30]

After a week of discussions Conference committees were appointed to deal with the four major issues: debts and restoration of Russian credit, a new treaty of commerce and navigation, Soviet territorial waters, and old Anglo-Tsarist treaties. The agenda of the all-important first committee was reserved for the plenary sessions. The three technical committees made progress, but negotiations stalled quickly on the crucial topics. Instead of returning concessions to property owners, the Soviets offered unofficially to settle these claims of £ 180 million for £ 10 million. Britain demanded the larger sum. Discussion of inter-governmental public debts was postponed. On May 20 the Soviets offered token compensation for holders of state and municipal Tsarist bonds if Britain guaranteed a large long-term loan. Although the greatest part of the loan was to be spent in England, the British delegation rejected it. In June Rakovsky offered bondholders' representatives (whose claims amounted to £ 40 million) one-sixth of the bonds' face value. But he

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[30] Daily Telegraph, April 15, 1924, p. 10; Western Mail, April 14, 1924, p. 7; The Times, April 14, p. 13, April 15, 1924, p. 15; Saturday Review, CXXXVII (April 19, 1924), 403.

excluded large bondholders, those who had aided the Whites, and those who had purchased bonds after March 16, 1921, thereby further reducing his commitment from £ 6 million to £ 3 million. Even this was contingent upon a government-guaranteed loan. The bondholders refused.[31]

By the end of July there appeared little chance for an agreement. The various committees recessed for several weeks at a time, and the plenary session had not met since May 27. Both sides seemed to be playing a waiting game. The British public was given little information on the proceedings. On two occasions the government again disavowed a guaranteed loan; MacDonald's denial in Commons on June 18 seemed definitive.[32] Rakovsky pleaded for a change in British policy.[33] But in June the Soviets tarnished their image further by ordering the British-owned Russo-Caucasian Company to cease operations in Russia.[34]

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[31] For the proceedings of the Conference during this period, see Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 479-85; Toynbee, ed., Survey of International Affairs, 1924, pp. 239-41; and Debates, CLXXV (July 7, 1924), cols. 820-25.

[32] The Times, May 21, 1924, p. 14; Debates, CLXXIV (June 18, 1924), col. 2095.

[33] Christian Rakovsky, "The Present Position of the London Negotiations," Russian Information and Review, IV (May 10, 1924), 292-93; interview with the press, June 1, 1924, Soviet Documents, I, 452-53.

[34] Debates, CLXXV (July 7, 1924), cols. 1891-92.

Most Tory papers now strongly opposed the Conference. In editorials with such titles as "The Invasion of Vampires," the Morning Post charged that many Soviet delegates were secret agents working to set up a "headquarters staff of Red Revolution in the capital of the British Empire." The Daily Mail claimed Soviet delegates faced execution if they returned home without cash to pay their terrorist police; if they conceded anything they would suffer the same fate.[35] Those papers which had been non-committal now hoped that MacDonald realized the futility of negotiating with the unrepentant Bolsheviks.[36]

The Spectator and the Observer were discouraged but hoped for a break. Garvin felt the need for a detente transcended financial considerations. He asked the government to bargain "on more realistic lines." The editor of the Spectator, John St. Loe Strachey, urged Britain to offer some credits to enable the Soviets to purchase British

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Labour pressure successfully reversed the decision against the commercial firm.

35 Morning Post, June 14, 1924, p. 6; Daily Mail, May 30, p. 8, July 8, 1924, p. 8. See also National Review, LXXXIII (July, 1924), 660-66, and English Review, XXXVIII (May, 1924), 621-22.

36 Daily Telegraph, July 8, 1924, p. 10; Saturday Review, CXXXVII (June 14, 1924), 604-5; The Times, May 22, p. 17, July 19, p. 14, July 29, 1924, p. 13; Empire Review, XL (July, 1924), 4. The Soviets accused the Tory press of trying to undermine the Conference; see Russian Information and Review, IV (May 10, 1024), 291-92.

goods. If they did not comply with the terms, the experiment could be terminated with little lost. But if, as Strachey expected, credits helped to revive trade and reduce unemployment, both governments would see the benefits of a comprehensive settlement.[37] Few Tory politicians, however, concurred with these two journals.

In May several Tory leaders criticized the Conference.[38] And over government objections, the predominantly Tory House of Lords passed a resolution on May 28 calling for a quick end to the negotiations. During the debate Curzon warned of a Labour hoax:

> That is the real danger, and the fear therefore, is that, in order to save their own position, in order to make out that they were not such fools as they appeared to be, and in order not to infuriate their extreme supporters, they may be driven to conclude something which they ought not to conclude, and which we shall presently see is not a genuine agreement, not a bona fide settlement, but what I may call a camouflaged agreement, an agreement put up in order to deceive the world into thinking that something has been concluded when it has not been concluded at all.[39]

Some Tory backbenchers expressed shock at the Soviets'

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[37] Observer, June 8, 1924, p. 11; Spectator, CXXXII (June 21, 1924), 988. Several weeks later Strachey buttressed his argument by printing an article from a "well-informed correspondent" who believed that Russia offered phenomenal possibilities for trade if she could secure credits; see Spectator, CXXXIII (July 5, 1924), 6-7.

[38] For speeches by Curzon and Ronald McNeill, see The Times, May 3, p. 17, May 15, 1924, p. 16.

[39] Lords Debates, LVII (May 28, 1924), cols. 719-26.

expulsion order against the Russo-Caucasian Company in June.[40]

Shortly before the summer recess the government finally consented to a debate. Speaking for the frontbench Opposition Arthur Steel-Maitland ridiculed the Soviet proposals and emphasized that the stalemate would continue until the Soviets changed.[41] Tory backbenchers expounded on his reasoning. Sir Philip Richardson denied that his fellow bankers wanted to sabotage the Conference. He indicated that if Russia recognized her debts she could expect some postponement of payment and even a reduction of the total amount. E. C. Grenfell, financier and M.P. for the City, defended his own signature on the bankers' manifesto. He had tried to trade with Russia since 1919 but was largely unsuccessful because of interference from Soviet authorities. As examples, he pointed to the Russo-Caucasian Company and the Moscow branch of his own firm which had been ordered closed on July 1 without explanation. Few traders would do business under these circumstances. Sir Victor Warrender, a merchant who had been in Russia from 1917 to 1919, cited several Soviet civil codes to show that British traders did not receive the same legal privileges and

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[40] Debates, CLXXIV (June 19, 1924), col. 2456.

[41] Ibid., CLXXV (July 7, 1924), cols. 1813-32.

protection accorded their Soviet counterparts in England. Unless Britain could secure some new concessions, he wanted the Conference ended quickly: the government "are only going to find themselves in a bigger mess than they are in now if they continue it."[42]

A few Tories exploded with anti-Soviet tirades. Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, leader of a British armored car company in Russia during the World War, demanded an apology and compensation for the murder of Captain Cromie. He then argued with a Labour M.P. who swore he had seen Cromie fire the first shots.[43] Guy Kindersley, a determined "rightist," protested even conditional recognition of Russia. It was morally wrong, he cried, to negotiate with this "unscrupulous camarilla" for the "mirage of trade." In summation for the frontbench Opposition Ronald McNeill again denied that his party wanted to abort the Conference.[44]

This debate showed a growing split in Tory ranks. Most newspapers and backbenchers felt the Conference should end, while the Opposition leadership seemed unwilling to prod the government. But these differences disappeared

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[42] Ibid., cols. 1844-47, 1852-56, 1899-1905.

[43] Ibid., cols. 1844, 1847-49. As parliamentary private secretary to Austen Chamberlain from 1919 to 1923, Locker-Lampson apparently had not involved himself with the Russian problem.

[44] Ibid., cols. 1883-94, 1905-14.

within a month.

In the last week of July the Cabinet decided to offer Russia a conditional guaranteed loan rather than admit failure. Negotiations were resumed quickly because MacDonald had promised a parliamentary discussion before an agreement was signed; and the summer adjournment was to begin on August 7. On August 5, after a twenty-hour bargaining session, the government announced a breakdown of the Conference. The two sides had failed to agree on the wording of a single clause regarding confiscated property. But a group of left-wing Labour backbenchers intervened, and a compromise formula was hammered out after another marathon session on August 6.[45]

Two treaties were drafted. By the terms of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation both nations received most favored nation status, and Britain included Russia in the Export Credits Scheme.[46] Superseding the Trade Agreement of 1921, the General Treaty dealt in part with such minor problems as the status of old treaties and fishing rights. In Article 6 of the crucial third chapter the Soviets

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[45] For these developments, see Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 483-90; Toynbee, ed., Survey of International Affairs, 1924, pp. 241-44; and Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 166-68.

[46] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 4, 1924), Cmnd. 2261, "Draft of Proposed Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." (London, 1924).

agreed to satisfy the bondholders' claims, but Britain conceded that Russia's perilous financial position precluded full restitution. After a majority of the bondholders came to terms with the Soviets, the terms themselves were to form part of a second Anglo-Soviet treaty. In Article 7 both sides reserved for discussion "at a later date" all questions concerning British war loans and Soviet counter-claims. In Article 8 the Soviets would give Britain a lump sum to distribute to persons who had lodged such "miscellaneous" claims as those for personal injury and confiscated bank deposits. Under Article 9 a board of three examiners from each country was to decide on the total amount of miscellaneous claims. According to Article 10 a joint commission was to evaluate the validity and amount of claims lodged by Britons whose businesses or concessions had been confiscated. In Article 11 both governments agreed to sign a second treaty incorporating the terms, total amount, and methods of repayment agreed upon in Articles 6 and 8 and those not settled by Article 10. Article 12 stated that after the treaty referred to in Article 11 was signed:

> His Britannic Majesty's Government will recommend Parliament to enable them to guarantee the interest and sinking fund of a loan to be issued by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The amounts, terms and conditions of the said loan and the purposes to which it shall be applied shall be defined in the treaty provided for in Article 11,

> which will not come into force until the necessary parliamentary authority for the guarantee of the said loan has been given.

The other important section, Article 16, declared that both countries would "restrain all persons and organisations under their direct or indirect control" from engaging in propaganda or subversive activity against each other.[47]

After agreement was reached at 3:30 P.M. on August 6, Under-Secretary Ponsonby rushed to have a copy of the Treaties typed for his use in the House that evening. With barely an hour to prepare a statement he stumbled through a virtually incoherent speech, displaying only the barest acquaintance with some of the terms. Arthur Steel-Maitland called Ponsonby a "pathetic figure" and criticized MacDonald's absence. Ronald McNeill echoed other Tory speakers when he thundered:

> I consider the whole thing an utter farce. I would be perfectly willing to join with the rest of the House in laughing at what certainly is in many of its aspects an extreme comedy, if I did not think that in regard to one important aspect, provision for or even hinting at our guaranteeing of a loan, it is not a comedy but a scandal.[48]

Ponsonby also announced that the government would move to adjourn the next day and sign the Treaties without

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[47] Ibid., Cmnd. 2260, "Draft of Proposed General Treaty between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," (London, 1924).

[48] Debates, CLXXVI (Aug. 6, 1924), cols. 3056, 3028-29.

further debate. Parliament would be asked to approve them during the fall session. Conservatives were outraged.[49] The government finally consented to a debate the next day, apparently because Lloyd George called the Treaties a "fake" and concurred with the Tory demand for an immediate discussion.[50]

On August 6 Tory newspapers were not surprised by the sudden demise of the Conference.[51] However, they reacted with anguished cries at the sudden volte-face. The Daily Telegraph called the Treaties "the most fantastically impossible document that has ever been presented to Parliament." The Times was critical of the vague wording: "By raising false expectations which cannot be fulfilled, it endangers any slight prospects there might be of improved relations with the Soviets." The Morning Post believed MacDonald had lost "his presence of mind" when allowing the "communists among his supporters" to establish "the

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[49] Ibid., cols. 3021-31, 3040-47, 3056-67, 3072-73.

[50] For Lloyd George's speech, see Ibid., cols. 3031-36. Northedge, The Troubled Giant, p. 308, believes Lloyd George's opposition was "incomprehensible" in view of his consistent advocacy of a rapprochement with Russia. Political considerations might help to explain Lloyd George's reaction, but it should be remembered that he always had opposed a government-guaranteed loan and had wanted the successor to the Trade Agreement to be a definitive settlement.

[51] The Times, Aug. 6, 1924, p. 11; Morning Post, Aug. 6, 1924, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, Aug. 6, 1924, p. 8.

Bolshevik revolutionaries permanently in this country there to work their will with impunity."[52]

Speaking for the frontbench Opposition on August 7, Robert Horne upheld the Prime Minister's right to initial the Treaties before the House approved but reasoned that his signature implied Britain's consent. If the Treaties were overturned later by parliament, the Russian people would feel they had been "tricked." Horne urged MacDonald to postpone action. Although increased trade would soften the impact of Soviet rule, lower European food prices, and assist Britain's lagging export industry, Horne believed that the draft Commercial Treaty did nothing to relieve the anxieties of British traders. Likewise, the General Treaty made no practical advance on the debt problem; even in the Trade Agreement of 1921 the Soviets had recognized in principle their obligations to British creditors. As the Article on the loan was worded, the Soviets would not have to consent to a debt settlement until after the loan guarantee was granted by parliament. Horne concluded that the Treaties were a "fantastic" face-saving device concocted at the last moment through mediation of some government supporters unwilling to admit defeat. "This is not even an

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[52] Daily Telegraph, Aug. 8, 1924, p. 8; The Times, Aug. 7, 1924, p. 13; Morning Post, Aug. 8, 1924, p. 6. See also Western Mail, Aug. 7, 1924, p. 6, and Daily Mail, Aug. 7, 1924, p. 6.

agreement to agree in the future," he said, but "only an agreement to postpone to the future all subjects of difficulty."[53] Aware of the opposition of Lloyd George and most of the Liberals, a few Tory backbenchers predicted a stunning defeat for the government.[54] Ponsonby's rebuttal was weak.[55]

In the House of Lords the same day Curzon ridiculed the government for defying their pledge to conduct open diplomacy. When the Treaties were announced in Commons on August 6, the Lord Chancellor did not even know that agreement had been reached. Even now, Curzon continued, the government leader in the House of Lords possessed only a typed copy and the Opposition had been given a copy only five minutes before the session started: "The history of . . . the last stages of this matter is one of the most amazing in the chronicles of Parliament."[56]

After the Treaties were signed on August 8, MacDonald and most other politicians left London for the summer holiday. Evaluations of the Treaties filled Tory newspapers during their absence; no other subject seemed

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[53] Debates, CLXXVI (Aug. 7, 1924), cols. 3143-53.

[54] Ibid., cols. 3157-60.

[55] Ibid., col. 3186.

[56] Lords Debates, LIX (Aug. 7, 1924), cols. 511-19.

important. Many editorial blasts in "ultra" and "rightist" journals bordered on hysteria. The Daily Mail likened the terms of the Treaties to those dictated by a merciless conqueror. It denounced MacDonald and the Bolsheviks for conspiring to rob Britons, while never mentioning the conditional terms. The Morning Post was stunned by the sight of the Prime Minister "taking his orders from a gang of foreign usurpers." The National Review called the whole affair a "particularly dirty and discreditable eyewash." In scarcely more measured terms The Times resurrected the argument about trafficking with a gang of barbarian butchers. The English Review assured MacDonald he was heading for "catastrophe" if he remained "the slave of the Moscow murderers."[57]

Three "conciliatory" Conservative journals, however, supported the Prime Minister. Time and Tide believed that Article 12 contained sufficient safeguards for the creditors and implicit assurances that much of the loan would be spent in Britain. J. L. Garvin was enthusiastic, hailing the Treaties as a return to "rational principles" in international affairs. Because the loan was conditional, he

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[57] Daily Mail, Aug. 13, p. 6, Aug. 22, 1924, p. 7; Morning Post, Aug. 9, p. 6, Aug. 12, 1924, p. 6; National Review, LXXXIV (September, 1924), 20-21; The Times, Aug. 12, p. 10, Sept. 4, p. 11, Sept. 15, p. 13, Sept. 20, 1924, p. 11; English Review, XXXIX (September, 1924), 320-25. See also Saturday Review, CXXXVIII (Aug. 16, 1924), 161. Editorials on the subject appeared almost daily in most Tory newspapers.

lashed out at its critics. The Spectator reasoned that the Treaties did not endanger British interests. It urged Conservatives to remember that the "essential object" of the Treaties was a reduction of unemployment.[58]

The Association of British Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of British Industries condemned the Treaties. They objected to the shelving of public debts, the partial recognition of private debts, and especially to the guaranteed loan.[59] Twenty-eight local Chambers of Commerce and the Association of British Creditors of Russia concurred.[60]

Conservative politicians opposed the Treaties for numerous reasons. Walter Elliot and others argued that they provided a new lease of life for the Bolsheviks who, at the moment, were embroiled in an internal power struggle. To hasten their fall Lady Askwith asked Britons to withdraw their savings from banks which might assist in a loan.[61] The "ultra" argument was stated most

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[58] Time and Tide, V (Sept. 26, 1924), 926; Observer, Aug. 10, p. 10, Sept. 14, p. 12, Sept. 28, 1924, p. 12; Spectator, CXXXIII (Aug. 16, 1924), 218-20, (Sept. 27, 1924), 412-13.

[59] The Times, Sept. 18, 1924, p. 7. A former Conservative minister, Sir Eric Geddes, headed the Federation at this time.

[60] Ibid., Sept. 14, p. 15, Sept. 8, 1924, p. 11. A. G. Marshall of Becos Traders was one of the few businessmen supporting the Treaties; see Ibid., Sept. 8, 1924, p. 9.

[61] Ibid., Sept. 27, 1924, p. 8; Daily Mail, Aug. 12,

succinctly by Lord Sydenham: "In the eternal war of good against evil, light against darkness, and Christian civilisation against blood-stained revolution, the forces of evil seem to have won a notable victory."[62] Some Tories claimed the Treaties were illegal because the King was not mentioned in the official description of the British government.[63] Backbencher Guy Kindersley deplored the grant of diplomatic immunity to members of the Soviet Trade Delegation. Lord Eustace Percy said that the most favored nation clause in the Commercial Treaty really meant that "British subjects [in Russia] shall not be treated worse than any foreigners."[64] Samuel Samuel, M.P., criticized the extension of the Export Credits Scheme because other countries offered safer investments. Backbencher A. M. Samuel foresaw a repudiation of Allied debts owed to Britain.[65] E. C. Grenfell's reversal of position was symptomatic of Tory feelings. During the debate on July 7, he had used temperate language regarding trade, but now he resorted to incendiary remarks to

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1924, p. 12. See also The Times, Sept. 10, 1924, p. 7.

[62] The Times, Aug. 26, 1924, p. 6.

[63] Ibid., Aug. 9, p. 11, Aug. 15, p. 12, Aug. 20, 1924, p. 6. In Ibid., Sept. 26, 1924, p. 7, Winston Churchill claimed the absence of the King's name was a concession to the Soviets.

[64] Ibid., Aug. 8, p. 13, Aug. 19, 1924, p. 11.

[65] Ibid., Sept. 27, 1924, p. 13; Daily Mail, Aug. 11, 1924, p. 7.

support his contention that the Soviets should be ostracized from the world economic community.[66]

The Russian delegation was guardedly optimistic about the Treaties.[67] The response from within Russia, however, was less restrained. Soviet papers rejoiced at the capitalists' recognition of the Revolution and their economic system. Kamenev, then a member of the ruling triumvirate, claimed they had received a guaranteed loan while merely promising to continue negotiations.[68] Rykov, the trade union chief, exclaimed, "This is a unique achievement, the greatest achievement of modern times."[69] Many Tories agreed completely with these evaluations and used them to back their own opposition.[70]

In September Conservative leaders joined in the attacks. Lord Birkenhead, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, and Winston Churchill (recently returned to the Tory fold), relied heavily on the moral argument.[71] Other leaders

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[66] The Times, Sept. 10, 1924, p. 9.

[67] E.g., Russian Information and Review, V (Aug. 23, 1924), 115, and Observer, Sept. 28, 1924, p. 17.

[68] Lyman, The First Labour Government, pp. 198-99.

[69] The Times, Sept. 15, 1924, p. 13.

[70] E.g., Daily Telegraph, Aug. 13, 1924, p. 8; Daily Mail, Aug. 18, 1924, p. 7; and The Times, Sept. 25, 1924, p. 12.

[71] The Times, Aug. 11, p. 12, Sept. 22, p. 7, Sept. 26,

spelled out concrete objections. Lord Balfour and Neville Chamberlain, for example, claimed Britain was in no position to extend a loan.[72] Robert Horne believed the loan might not be spent in Britain. Laming Worthington-Evans foresaw a repetition of Genoa.[73] Even Viscount Cecil (formerly Lord Robert Cecil), a "conciliator," accused the government of deceit: "There is nothing worse than holding out to great people like the Russians the prospect of getting money when you don't intend them to get it."[74]

This Tory rhetoric was greatly intensified by a mushrooming political crisis. Concerned with Liberal opposition to the Treaties, MacDonald stated that a rejection by Commons would be taken as a vote of censure. On September 30 parliament reconvened for a special session. The next day the parliamentary Liberal party sealed the government's doom by approving overwhelmingly a motion condemning the Treaties.[75] The Annual Conservative

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1924, p. 14. Apparently this was one of the first times Birkenhead spoke about Russia since the breakup of the Coalition.

[72] Ibid., Sept. 26, p. 14, Sept. 18, 1924, p. 14. See also Arthur Steel-Maitland's comments in the National Review, LXXXIV (September, 1924), 49-62.

[73] The Times, Sept. 27, p. 7, Sept. 29, 1924, p. 11.

[74] Ibid., Sept. 4, 1924, p. 7.

[75] Trevor Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914-1935 (London, 1966), pp. 298-300; Lyman, The First

Conference was enlivened by the prospect of Labour's fall. The Report of the Conservative Council claimed the "amazing" Treaties were inspired by the leaders of the Third International.[76] A resolution against the Treaties passed unanimously.[77] Stanley Baldwin repeated the substance of Horne's parliamentary speech of August 7 for the delegates. But unlike some of his colleagues Baldwin stressed that the Labour government and the Bolsheviks were linked only by a mutual spirit of "internationalism."[78]

The Election Campaign

When the Tory Conference ended on October 4, it was predicted that the government would be toppled by the Russian Treaties. In the event, however, they met defeat in the famous Campbell case.[79] In late July J. Ross Campbell,

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Labour Government, pp. 199-204. Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 273, cite the "31st" as the date of the Liberal meeting: September has only thirty days. It is only one of a number of errors which mar this volume. Earlier, J. L. Garvin had urged MacDonald to force a dissolution over the Russian Treaties; see Observer, Sept. 21, 1924, p. 12.

[76] Report of the Conservative Council, Conservative Conference Minutes, 1924, p. 11.

[77] Ibid., Appendix.

[78] Ibid.

[79] This account of the Campbell issue is based on Lyman, The First Labour Government, pp. 237-44, and Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 265-72.

editor of the Communist Workers' Weekly, had printed an article urging British troops not to fire on workers if class warfare erupted. When copies appeared in several army barracks the Attorney General moved to prosecute Campbell for inciting mutiny. A few left-wing Labour backbenchers charged that the evidence was flimsy, adding that Campbell was an amputee and much decorated war veteran. In mid-August MacDonald quietly ordered the proceedings dropped. The Attorney General routinely defended the government's decision when parliament met on September 30, but an outcry from the Opposition benches reflected a growing Tory belief that the government had bowed again to their "Communist" left wing. MacDonald consented to a full debate on October 8.

On October 3 Liberals announced they would ask for a Select Committee to investigate the Campbell case. The government defended the Attorney General. With the Liberals committed, Conservatives put down a censure motion. Before the scheduled debate Conservative leaders persuaded Baldwin to adopt the Liberal motion to prevent them from opposing the Tories. The government then would have to dissolve parliament or accept a humiliating investigation.[80] However, Baldwin really wanted Labour turned out on the

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[80] Swinton, I Remember, p. 158; Lyman, The First Labour Government, p. 239, n. 2.

Soviet Treaties because MacDonald had allowed his "extremists" to "smash" him.[81]

Speaking for the frontbench Opposition on October 8, Robert Horne said the Campbell article was a deliberate attempt to undermine the Constitution. MacDonald denied the charges but was soundly defeated.[82] The Cabinet resigned, and an election was scheduled for October 29.

Tory politicians and newspapers developed generally two lines of attack during the campaign. One group evaluated the Russian Treaties on their merits, while the other fused the Campbell case with the Treaties to mount a moral attack against Labour. The former group usually avoided vituperative language, while the latter used it frequently. Several journals labeled the election a struggle between British civilization and Russian Bolshevism.[83] Military analogies were used frequently: the Daily Mail urged voters to save Britain from "a danger as great as that which threatened it in 1914."[84] For these papers a vote for Labour was simply

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[81] Stamfordham to the King, Oct. 7, 1924, cited by Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 273.

[82] Debates, CLXVII (Oct. 8, 1924), cols. 581-700.

[83] Morning Post, Oct. 17, 1924, p. 8. See also The Times, Oct. 14, p. 15, Oct. 24, 1924, p. 15. After having supported the government's attempt to come to terms with Russia, the Daily Express joined these papers; see Shane, "British Reaction to the Soviet Union," p. 64.

[84] Daily Mail, Oct. 24, 1924, p. 8.

a vote for revolution. If Labour won, Bolsheviks would flood the country, reducing it to the abject condition of Red Russia. These journals exploited every possible appeal. The English Review, for example, printed an article by "His Imperial Highness," the late Tsar's cousin, Grand Duke Cyril, who warned that Russian patriots would never forgive England for cavorting with the Reds.[85] Outraged by an endorsement for Labour given by the Jewish Times, the Morning Post cautioned that traditional "tolerance" of English Jews would be "hard to sustain."[86]

A few "centrist" Tory papers concentrated on the Treaties. The Daily Telegraph asked that the loan (rumored to be £ 40 million) be used to develop the Empire. The Saturday Review noted that while other nations raising money on the London market provided strict guarantees, the Soviet loan lacked any security. The Observer never mentioned the Russian Treaties; instead, Garvin strongly opposed Labour's economic policies.[87]

Some Tory leaders also avoided the moral issue. Throughout the campaign Baldwin repeated the criticisms first

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[85] English Review, XXXIX (October, 1924), 483-84.

[86] Morning Post, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 8.

[87] Daily Telegraph, Oct. 23, 1924, p. 8; Saturday Review, CXXXVIII (Oct. 18, 1924), 385; Observer, Oct. 12, 1924, p. 12.

advanced at Newcastle on October 2: Russia had little to trade, the Treaties would not increase employment, and the guaranteed loan was unprecedented. He did not, however, object to de jure recognition or the Trade Agreement of 1921.[88] Hoare, Balfour, Lloyd-Greame, Lord Derby, and other "centrists" also offered temperate rational objections to the Treaties.[89]

In contrast, Churchill strenuously opposed any entanglement with the "gang of cosmopolitan adventurers who settled down [on Russia] like vultures and were tearing it apart."[90] Joynson-Hicks spoke similarly.[91] Birkenhead stressed the alleged affinity between Labour and the Soviets. In his view the Treaties were just a taste of what MacDonald and "the assassins and cutthroats in Russia" had planned for Britain.[92] Lord Curzon said it was "difficult to talk about the Bolsheviks and use the mere attenuated

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[88] For summaries of several of Baldwin's campaign speeches, see The Times, Oct. 24, p. 9, Oct. 27, p. 14, Oct. 29, 1924, p. 8, and Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, pp. 274-75.

[89] For reports of their speeches, see The Times, Oct. 11, p. 6, Oct. 17, p. 16, Oct. 18, p. 8, Oct. 23, 1924, p. 10.

[90] Ibid., Oct. 20, 1924, p. 10. See also Ibid., Oct. 11, p. 6, Oct. 18, 1924, p. 7.

[91] Ibid., Oct. 16, p. 9, Oct. 23, 1924, p. 9.

[92] Earl of Birkenhead, A Call to Conservatives (London, 1924), pamphlet no. 2486. See also The Times, Oct. 16, p. 9, Oct. 18, 1924, p. 7.

adjectives of the English dictionary."[93] Some Tory leaders employing this language had long been strongly anti-Bolshevik.[94] Others, however, had rarely spoken about Russia.[95] Even Austen Chamberlain and Viscount Cecil resorted to anti-Soviet barbs. Chamberlain was opposed by a formidable Communist candidate, and Cecil had tired of Soviet denunciations of the League of Nations.[96]

The Conservative Central Office swamped the electorate with memos, handbooks, and leaflets on the Treaties, the Campbell case, and the alleged link between Russian Bolshevism and British socialism.[97] Much of this literature was intended to create a "crisis" atmosphere. Women were told that Communism destroyed marriage and were warned of Communist spies disguised as nurses in an attempt to win recruits for a Red revolution. Mothers were advised that education in Bolshevik Russia brought corruption,

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[93] The Times, Oct. 22, 1924, p. 9.

[94] E.g., the speech of Lord Salisbury in Ibid., Oct. 23, 1924, p. 10.

[95] For the speeches of Leopold Amery, M.P. and Sir Evelyn Cecil, M.P., see Ibid., Oct. 11, p. 6, Oct. 17, 1924, p. 9.

[96] Ibid., Oct. 21, p. 9, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 8.

[97] E.g., Intervention in Russia (London, 1924), General Election Memo no. 12; The Russian Trade Agreement of 1921, Memo no. 9; The Campbell Case: the Facts, Memo no. 3; Fighting Notes Against the Bolshevik Treaties, pamphlet no. 2441; Communism, a World Force, no. 2402; The Surrender to the Bolsheviks, no. 2413; and Why Back the Bolshie Loan?, no. 2397.

disease, and death to thousands of innocent children: "For the Children's sake put the Unionists in Office! They will keep the Bolshie Teachers out of Britain." One leaflet told farm workers that "Red Men from Moscow" were preparing to capture the country's food supply in advance of the revolution.[98]

To counter these tactics MacDonald and other Labourites spent as much time reaffirming their hostility to Bolshevism as they did defending the Treaties. MacDonald ridiculed the Tories: "If you want to frighten all the old ladies of both sexes all you have to do is to put on a red sheet and shout 'Bolshy' and hire your leader writers to write out of the fullness of their ignorance about Bolshevism."[99]

Such campaign rhetoric provided a suitable backdrop for a bombshell which exploded just six days before the election. On Friday, October 24 the Foreign Office protested a letter allegedly written by Gregory Zinoviev, head of the Third International, to the Central Committee of the British Communist party. Dated September 15 the letter urged British workers to prevent Labour leaders from

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[98] For a sampling of leaflets, see Red Bread from Ruined Russia (London, 1924), pamphlet no. 2446; To Women, no. 2409; A Message to Farm-Workers, no. 2411; To Parents, no. 2408; Shall Bolshies Teach our Boys and Girls?, no. 2431; and Communism and the Churches, no. 2407.

[99] The Times, Oct. 15, 1924, p. 9.

compromising on the Treaties because unaltered ratification would facilitate the "complete success of an armed insurrection." British Communists should increase their propaganda activities among army units and munitions workers. By converting Army "specialists" they would strengthen one of their weakest links. In the event of "actual strife" these "future directors of the British Red Army" would be one of the keys to success.[100] The British note called the letter an unwarranted interference in her domestic affairs and warned the Soviets not to disavow responsibility merely because it came from the Comintern.[101]

On October 25 the Daily Mail announced that it had distributed a recently obtained copy of the Zinoviev letter to other Conservative newspapers on the previous morning. It charged that the government decided to publicize it that same afternoon after realizing that the press had secured copies. The rest of the editorial denounced the Soviets for preparing an insurrection and called for a Tory victory because they knew how to handle "treason."[102] On the same day The Times stated that the letter offered concrete proof

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[100] The text of the Zinoviev letter can be found in "A Selection of Papers," pp. 28-29.

[101] J. D. Gregory (head of the Northern Department at the Foreign Office) to Rakovsky, Oct. 24, 1924, Ibid., pp. 30-32.

[102] Daily Mail, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 8.

of the intimate connection between the Comintern and the Soviet government. The Western Mail demanded the arrest of all Communists and the formation of vigilante groups. J. L. Garvin regretted that his cherished hope had been dashed repeatedly by men like Zinoviev, "political epileptics whom Dostoievsky would have called 'The Idiots'": amicable relations would be impossible until the Moscow "realists" dealt with their "Anacharsis Clootz."[103]

The British Communist party called the letter a "complete fabrication." Rakovsky's reply labelled it a "gross forgery" because of alleged irregularities in the letterhead and in Zinoviev's signature. Acting Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov asked for an arbitration court to determine its authenticity.[104] During the last weekend of the campaign the Prime Minister and other Labour leaders refused comment.

Tory politicians strained to find words strong enough to express their feelings. Churchill claimed MacDonald was unable to stand up to Bolshevism. Joynson-Hicks denounced the attempt to create "mutiny, bloodshed, and red ruin in our land." Birkenhead accused MacDonald

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[103] The Times, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 13; Western Mail, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 6; Observer, Oct. 26, 1924, p. 12. See also Morning Post, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 8, and Daily Telegraph, Oct. 25, 1924, p. 8.

[104] The Times, Oct. 27, 1924, pp. 11, 12, 8.

of concealing the letter since September.[105] Curzon cried, "A more wicked, a more pernicious, and a more detestable document has never appeared in print." Most Conservative speakers that weekend would have agreed with Laming Worthington-Evans that the only election issue now was whether the nation was to be ruled by the "Bolshies or Britons, the Red Flag or the Union Jack."[106] Only Baldwin did not mention the letter.[107]

On Monday, October 27 the Daily Mail and the Morning Post accused MacDonald of withholding the letter deliberately. Other Tory papers demanded an immediate explanation.[108] Later in the day the Prime Minister stated that a copy of the letter had reached him on October 16, six days after it had been received by the Foreign Office. While it was being verified he had ordered the Foreign Office to prepare a draft protest which, because of his campaign schedule, did not reach him until October 23. The next morning he had sent the slightly altered note back to the Foreign Office, "expecting it to come back to me again

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[105] Ibid., Oct. 27, 1924, pp. 7-8.

[106] For reports of speeches by Curzon, Worthington-Evans, Horne, Amery, and Sir Douglas Hogg, see Ibid., p. 8.

[107] Ibid., p. 14.

[108] Daily Mail, Oct. 27, 1924, p. 8; Morning Post, Oct. 27, 1924, p. 8; The Times, Oct. 27, 1924, p. 13; Daily Telegraph, Oct. 27, 1924, p. 8.

with proofs of authenticity, but that night it was published." MacDonald did not overtly criticize Foreign Office officials, but he smelled a political plot because the Daily Mail and the Conservative Central Office allegedly possessed copies.[109]

That night the Central Office denied the charge.[110] The next day the Daily Telegraph called MacDonald's explanation the culmination of "the most extravagant record of political ineptitude and dishonesty within our recollection." The Daily Mail and The Times did not believe that the civil servants would have published the letter without proof of its authenticity.[111] Birkenhead questioned "the judgement and insight, and almost the sanity, of the Prime Minister."[112] According to Balfour, "The government is really a tool of foreign criminal conspirators." Even Baldwin wondered if MacDonald really had meant to conceal the letter.[113] Austen Chamberlain scored MacDonald for not maintaining close communications with the Foreign Office

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[109] The Times, Oct. 28, 1924, p. 8.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Daily Telegraph, Oct. 28, 1924, p. 6; Daily Mail, Oct. 28, 1924, p. 8; The Times, Oct. 28, 1924, p. 13.

[112] The Times, Oct. 29, 1924, p. 7. See also speeches by Churchill, Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire, and Lord Cave in The Times, Oct. 28, p. 8, Oct. 29, 1924, p. 8.

[113] Ibid., Oct. 28, 1924, pp. 14, 8.

while touring the country.[114]

On the final day of the campaign MacDonald announced that he had obtained information indicating the letter was a forgery concocted by his opponents.[115] But the claim was lost in a welter of Tory invective. The electorate returned 419 Conservatives, almost seventy per cent of the membership of Commons. Liberals retained only 42 of their 158 seats, and Labour increased their total vote but won only 151 seats, a loss of 40 seats. Tories were overjoyed by their smashing victory. The Morning Post advised the party to fight "the plot to destroy the British Empire." According to The Times neither the Campbell case, nor the Treaties, nor even the Zinoviev letter had tipped the scales. Instead, "It was the perception that these and other examples were symptoms of Labour's system of thought and policy which is alien from Great Britain." Other Tory publications concurred.[116] Joynson-Hicks called the victory a "moral uprising" rather than a political triumph.[117] Only the Observer disagreed, Garvin pointing to dissatisfaction

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[114] Ibid., Oct. 29, 1924, p. 8.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Morning Post, Oct. 31, 1924, p. 8; The Times, Oct. 31, 1924, p. 13; Saturday Review, CXXXVIII (Nov. 1, 1924), 438; Spectator, CXXXIII (Nov. 1, 1924), 632-33.

[117] The Times, Nov. 4, 1924, p. 16. See also National Review, LXXXIV (December, 1924), 467.

with Labour's economic policies.[118]

It is difficult to evaluate Tory opinions of Russia in 1924. Many of their unusually unrestrained anti-Soviet remarks cannot be treated as genuine. After all, they exploited a number of issues to discredit Labour in hopes of returning to office. Especially during the campaign many Tories aimed at creating a Red scare to panic nervous voters. After the Zinoviev revelation even such moderate "centrists" as Baldwin and Balfour could not resist the inflammatory language they had avoided previously. Only the opinions of the "ultras" and some "rightists" cannot be questioned because they employed these same arguments against Russia throughout the decade. In sum, the Tories' political use of the Russian issue in 1924 was not necessarily indicative of their overall attitudes.

Not all Tory opinions of the Treaties, however, were contrived. The evidence substantiates the Tory claim that they were only an empty face-saving device. In fact, a Tory government could have fashioned a similar treaty without retreating from any of their demands against Russia. When MacDonald allowed his left wing to force a continuation of the Conference after it was clear that the Soviets would not honor their debts, he exposed himself to legitimate Tory criticisms. By staking his government's future on the

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[118] Observer, Nov. 2, 1924, p. 12.

Russian issue, he made a disastrous mistake. As usual, Soviet remarks did not benefit him. MacDonald should have taken note of Tory prophecies made earlier in the year.

Tories believed the Zinoviev letter was genuine.[119] For them it was merely another Soviet attempt--albeit foolhardy--to foment revolution. The letter did not swing the election to the Tories; Labour was trailing badly soon after the campaign began. As the Chairman of the Conservative party at the time recalled years later, "I have no doubt that we would have got in in 1924, but we would have had a smaller majority."[120] With Conservatives taking office under these circumstances, the future of Anglo-Soviet relations appeared uncertain.

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[119] See Appendix I for an analysis of Tory involvement in the letter episode.

[120] James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, p. 199.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEADLOCK

Chamberlain's Diplomacy: Masterful Inertia

The composition of Stanley Baldwin's new government was not propitious for harmonious relations with Russia. Three "rightists" gained important Cabinet posts. William Joynson-Hicks advanced to Home Secretary, Lord Birkenhead returned to office as Secretary of State for India, and Winston Churchill became the surprise choice as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lords Cave, Curzon, and Salisbury, and Sir Douglas Hogg were the other "rightist" Cabinet appointees. Baldwin, Austen Chamberlain, Viscount Cecil, Philip Cunliffe-Lister (formerly Lloyd-Greame), Laming Worthington-Evans, Samuel Hoare, Edward Wood, and Arthur Steel-Maitland were "centrists." Three ministers had altered their opinions of Russia since the Coalition era. Birkenhead changed from a "centrist" (or even a "conciliator") to a "rightist" after he escaped from the influence of Lloyd George. Hoare had been a leading "rightist" but became a "centrist" after the White defeat. Soviet attacks on the League of Nations caused Cecil to switch from a "conciliator" to a "centrist." The void created by Baldwin's general lack of interest in foreign affairs was filled by Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, who developed the government's Russian policy.

Diplomatic recognition of Russia, the Zinoviev letter, the Treaties, and the Trade Agreement figured prominently in the Cabinet's earliest deliberations.[1] "Rightist" ministers had strong opinions. Joynson-Hicks wrote that the Treaties were "dead."[2] Churchill advocated a diplomatic break. In a letter to the Foreign Secretary he reasoned that it would "be everywhere accepted as a strong and sensible act giving full expression to the national mandate." If Soviet machinations ceased, recognition could be extended later. However, the Trade Agreement should be kept for "any material or practical advantage."[3] Austen Chamberlain replied: "When recognition has been accorded, you do not restore the old position by withdrawing it. Clearly it is not a matter to be decided without grave thought."[4]

At a Cabinet meeting on November 19, Chamberlain used this argument to salvage both the Trade Agreement and

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[1] See Appendix I for the new government's deliberations on the Zinoviev letter.

[2] Joynson-Hicks to Chamberlain, Nov. 14, 1924, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 51/8. See also a memorandum by Joynson-Hicks, Nov. 24, 1924, FO 418/62.

[3] Churchill to Chamberlain, Nov. 14, 1924, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 51/8.

[4] Chamberlain to Churchill, Nov. 17, 1924, Ibid. See also Chamberlain to Amery (Colonial Secretary), Nov. 21, 1924, Ibid.

the diplomatic link; but the Treaties were withdrawn.[5] When Chamberlain informed the Soviets, he did not follow Cecil's recommendation to include a paragraph criticizing Soviet propaganda.[6] In the address from the Throne on December 9, the government hoped that "normal intercourse" with Russia would not be interrupted. Ramsay MacDonald was surprised by this seemingly friendly tone.[7] Chamberlain later clarified the statement:

> Normal relations with any Government require that that Government should observe the normal relations of friendly conduct existing between any two nations. . . . It is obvious that each side must respect what I may call the courtesies and conventions of international life upon which friendly relations between Powers are based. I think it would be wise for us to hold our hands and wait and watch before deciding on any fresh action in either direction, or of any kind.[8]

Chamberlain, a "centrist," indicated here that his Russian

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[5]Cabinet minutes, Nov. 19, 1924, CAB 23/49. Unfortunately there is only a sketchy and incomplete account of the discussion. Churchill apparently advocated a break but was outvoted. Viscount Cecil, who sided with Chamberlain, noted the next day, "I did not see how we could break off relations with the Soviets altogether at this moment, and I could not think of any lesser steps to take which would be at all effective"; see Cecil to Churchill, Nov. 20, 1924, Cecil Papers, Add. MSS, 51097.

[6]Chamberlain to Rakovsky, Nov. 21, 1924, "A Selection of Papers," p. 34; Cecil to Churchill, Nov. 20, 1924, Cecil Papers, Add. MSS, 51097. For the reply, see Rakovsky to Chamberlain, Nov. 28, 1924, Soviet Documents, I, 476-77.

[7]Debates, CLXXIX (Dec. 9, 1924), cols. 48, 66-67.

[8]Ibid., (Dec. 15, 1924), col. 679.

policy would differ from those of previous governments. At first glance it appeared that he wished to bury his head in the sand. However, in disavowing either a break or a detente, he made the Soviets reponsible for harmonious relations. Although risking the alienation of both the Soviets and the "rightist" Tories for opposite reasons, he believed Russia would come to terms eventually.

His policy was supported by the Conservative press, which now abandoned their election rhetoric. The Daily Telegraph called it "reasonable statesmanship." Even the Morning Post was pleased that the Soviets would be held accountable for their actions.[9] "Conciliatory" Tory papers readopted their earlier stand. The Spectator even advocated a resumption of the 1924 Conference:

> Unless we are to break off relations again, some sort of treaty we must have with Russia. It will now be extremely difficult to achieve a settlement, but the necessity of such a settlement and the benefits, commercial and political, which it can bring us are just as great as ever.

Confident that the Soviet regime would adopt capitalism, the Observer urged the government to help the Moscow "realists" overcome the "extremists" by negotiating a comprehensive settlement.[10] Many Tory politicians praised the Foreign

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[9] Daily Telegraph, Dec. 10, 1924, p. 10; Morning Post, Dec. 10, 1924, p. 10. See also English Review, XXXIX (December, 1924), 756, and The Times, Nov. 22, 1924, p. 13.

[10] Spectator, CXXXIII (Nov. 15, 1924), 731; Observer, Nov. 23, p. 12, Dec. 28, 1924, p. 12, Jan. 25, 1925, p. 12.

Secretary and avoided inflammatory remarks.[11]

During the first several months of 1925 Anglo-Soviet relations remained tranquil, if cool. On January 6 Rakovsky asked Chamberlain to extend the Export Credits Scheme. He was told that Russia first must cease interfering with British interests around the world.[12] Two months later Chicherin announced that Russia was ready to renew negotiations, but Chamberlain informed Commons that nothing would be done until the Soviets repudiated Comintern propaganda.[13] On April 1 Chamberlain told Rakovsky that he possessed evidence of Soviet intrigue in China, Persia, and elsewhere. Rakovsky disagreed, but the Foreign Secretary ended the "useless" conversation.[14] These initial contacts reinforced Chamberlain's belief in Russia's "desperate

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See also Time and Tide, V (Dec. 5, 1924), 1185; Saturday Review, CXXXIX (Jan. 17, 1925), 46.

[11] E.g., the remarks of Lord Curzon in Lords Debates, LX (Dec. 16, 1924), cols. 125-32, and Lords Newton and Sydenham in cols. 114-24. Henry Page Croft in Debates, CLXXIX (Dec. 9, 1924), cols. 104-7, and Neville Chamberlain (Minister of Health) in The Times, Nov. 29, 1924, p. 14, were especially temperate.

[12] Chamberlain to Hodgson, Jan. 6, 1925, "A Selection of Papers," pp. 35-36.

[13] Debates, CLXXXI (March 4, 1925), col. 407.

[14] Chamberlain to Hodgson, April 1, 1925, "A Selection of Papers," pp. 37-39.

anxiety" for a settlement. Continued procrastination, he felt, would crack their inflexibility.[15]

Soviet leaders did act as if a new agreement was of paramount importance.[16] Chicherin was piqued by Chamberlain's evasive attitude, "We cannot make new proposals if we do not know what makes the former proposals [the Treaties] unacceptable."[17] In uncommonly restrained speeches the Soviets asserted occasionally that Tories were working to bring them to their knees through isolation.[18] Labour spokesmen concurred.[19]

The diplomatic gulf soon widened. As early as December, 1924 Conservative papers began to concentrate on an alleged escalation of Soviet intrigue in Europe. An abortive Communist uprising in Estonia that month was viewed by some papers as the beginning of another effort to overthrow Western civilization.[20] In April, 1925 a

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[15] Minute by Chamberlain, Feb. 10, 1925, FO 418/63.

[16] E.g., Rakovsky's speech in Russian Information and Review, VI (Jan. 3, 1925), 5-6.

[17] Soviet Documents, Vol. II: 1925-1932 (New York, 1952), p. 39.

[18] E.g., Kamenev's speech in Russian Information and Review, V (Dec. 20, 1924), 388-89.

[19] The Times, May 22, 1925, p. 12.

[20] Ibid., Dec. 4, 1924, p. 15; English Review, XL (January, 1925), 12-13.

Communist bomb exploded in a Sofia church where Bulgarian leaders had gathered. This event led to a resurgence of anti-Soviet invective, some Tory newspapers charging the Russians with masterminding the plot. The National Review demanded protection against the "mad dogs of Moscow." The Daily Mail and the Morning Post called for a severance of diplomatic relations, the latter paper reasoning, "If the Bolsheviks are equal to blowing up a cathedral in Sofia they are equal to blowing up a cathedral in London."[21]

The Bulgarian incident coincided with an internal development which seemed to substantiate these fears. In 1923 the British Communist party had founded the so-called Minority Movement to capture the Trades Union Congress for the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern). The Movement received widespread publicity in April, 1925 when the TUC, previously anti-Communist and wary of Russian intentions, met with Soviet trade union delegates to discuss international labor solidarity.[22] Many Tories believed the TUC was succumbing to the Reds. The Soviets were accused of using the Minority Movement to force a revolution.

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21 National Review, LXXXV (May, 1925), 340; Daily Mail, April 21, 1925, Morning Post, April 21, 1925, cited by Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 200-3. See also The Times, April 20, p. 5, May 2, 1925, p. 13.

22 Roderick Martin, Communism and the British Trade Unions, 1924-1933: a Study of the National Minority Movement (Oxford, 1969), pp. 62-64.

Although only a few "ultra" and "rightist" journals called for a diplomatic break in retaliation, most papers were troubled by these alleged domestic and foreign plots.[23]

Several Tory newspapers analyzed internal Soviet developments to find an explanation for their conduct. The ouster of Trotsky from the War Commissariat in January, 1925 was interpreted by most papers to mean the final triumph of the left-wing triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin. Both "rightist" and "conciliatory" papers warned that Britain could expect more provocations from these fanatics.[24] Predicting imminent bankruptcy and famine in Russia, some extremist papers stressed that a break would help to oust the Soviets.[25] However, the "conciliatory" press claimed conditions in Russia were improving.[26]

Some Tory backbenchers also seemed alarmed. On

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[23] The Times, April 25, p. 13, May 2, 1925, p. 13; Spectator, LXXXIV (April 18, 1925), 621-22; English Review, XLI (July, 1925), 17-20.

[24] Spectator, CXXXIV (Jan. 24, 1925), 109-10; Observer, Jan. 25, 1925, p. 12; The Times, Jan. 20, 1925, p. 13; Daily Mail, Jan. 20, 1925, p. 9; National Review, LXXXIV (February, 1925), 827-28.

[25] Daily Mail, June 1, 1925, p. 6; English Review, XL (February, 1925), 126; The Times, Jan. 20, 1925, p. 13; H. A. Gwynne (editor of the Morning Post) to Chamberlain, Oct. 8, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/448.

[26] Observer, April 26, 1925, p. 12; Saturday Review, CXXXVIII (Dec. 27, 1924), 645-46; Time and Tide, VI (May 8, 1925), 445.

March 3 two new Members, Geoffrey Peto and Sir Frank Nelson, introduced a motion condemning Soviet propaganda in Britain and the Empire. After a series of Tory speakers offered strong support, the motion passed easily.[27] In May a delegation of "ultra" and "rightist" Tory backbenchers asked Austen Chamberlain to suspend relations until propaganda in Britain ceased. The Foreign Secretary replied that it would be impolitic without a more serious justification.[28]

Cabinet ministers initially had refrained from discussing Russia in public speeches, but on March 9 Joynson-Hicks accused "the small political gang in Moscow" of working to smash the Empire. On April 3 Birkenhead stated, "We, at least, do not desire to have any contact at all with elements of Soviet Russia." Several weeks later Joynson-Hicks promised action against Russia within "a few months."[29] The fervor of these denunciations soon intensified.[30]

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[27] Debates, CLXXXI (March 3, 1925), cols. 352-98. The motion was overturned on a technical violation of House rules by its supporters.

[28] Daily Telegraph, May 12, 1925, cited by Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 204.

[29] The Times, March 10, 1925, p. 16; Daily Mail, April 4, 1925, p. 4; The Times, May 1, 1925, p. 11.

[30] For extracts from later speeches by Birkenhead and Joynson-Hicks, see Communism Unmasked (London, 1925), pamphlet no. 2583, pp. 6-7. See also an article by Wilfred Ashley (Transport Minister) in English Review, XL (May, 1925), 628-30.

Developments in China unexpectedly supplied "rightist" Tories with more ammunition. An anti-foreign movement founded in China after the war resulted in increasing friction between native workers and their foreign employers. On May 30, 1925 British police fired on a group of striking workers demonstrating in the foreign settlement at Shanghai. Within weeks a general strike paralyzed industry, and British-owned property was assaulted. Chinese Nationalists also directed most of their verbal attacks against Britain. With over £ 250 million invested in Chinese industries and with thousands of Britons living in China, Britain had good reason to fear a national rebellion.[31] The Soviets played an important role in directing the anti-foreign movement. Under the guidance of their emissary, Michael Borodin, many Communists had joined the Kuomintang. Soviet leaders openly encouraged Chinese aspirations for self-determination.[32]

Many Tories accused Soviet agents of arousing Chinese nationalism to foment revolution. Even such

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[31] H. Owen Chapman, The Chinese Revolution, 1926-1927 (London, 1928), pp. 70-80; Werner Levi, Modern China's Foreign Policy (Minneapolis, 1953), pp. 182-85.

[32] For a comprehensive account of Soviet involvement in China, see Allen S. Whiting, Soviet Policies in China, 1917-1924 (New York, 1954). For a typical expression of Soviet sympathy, see Christian Rakovsky, "The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia," Foreign Affairs, IV (1925-26), 574-84.

moderate journals as the Observer and the Saturday Review charged that their activities threatened Anglo-Russian relations.[33] Some papers demanded a break. In June the Daily Mail printed numerous tirades against Bolshevik intrigue in China and reprimanded the government for not acting. The usually temperate Daily Telegraph now concluded that the Soviet embassy constituted "a dangerous menace to law and order."[34] In mid-June Birkenhead, Joynson-Hicks, and Horne delivered strong attacks.[35] In separate speeches on June 28, Birkenhead, Horne, and Attorney General Sir Douglas Hogg broadened their indictment by citing Soviet subversion in India and in Britain, as well as in China.[36]

During a press interview on July 2, Chicherin denied any Soviet involvement in China, calling Conservative charges "lies from beginning to end," and asserting that Communists "would never make it their aim to stir up in one people hatred against all other peoples." Recent Tory

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[33] The Times, June 15, p. 15, June 27, p. 15, July 6, 1925, p. 16; Observer, June 28, 1925, p. 13; Saturday Review, CXXXIX (June 20, 1925), 663.

[34] Daily Mail, May 28-June 10, and June 26, 1925, p. 8; Daily Telegraph, June 27, 1925, p. 10.

[35] The Times, June 22, p. 9, June 15, p. 9, June 23, 1925, p. 18.

[36] Ibid., June 29, 1925, p. 9.

speeches irked him, "Lord Birkenhead is seeking a rupture of diplomatic relations with us."[37] A week later Rakovsky complained to Chamberlain personally.[38]

Hoping to ease mounting tensions, the Foreign Secretary publicly urged "everyone" to refrain from language which would make relations "more dangerous than they are."[39] He also told his Cabinet colleagues that their polemics really delighted the Soviets. What disturbed them most, he believed, was indifference: Britain simply should ignore them. Although promising to watch propaganda closely, Chamberlain concluded that a break would help the Moscow "extremists" oust the "moderates." The Cabinet agreed, but several ministers seemed disgruntled.[40]

The turmoil in China subsided in July, but reports of Soviet subversion continued to pour into the Foreign Office. Chamberlain wrote to Baldwin in despair, "The provocation offered as shown by this secret information is such as I suppose we have never tolerated from any Government and it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the attitude which I have thought it right to recommend to the Cabinet." But he added that a break might help the Soviets

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[37] Soviet Documents, II, 51-52.

[38] Chamberlain to Hodgson, July 13, 1925, FO 371/11016.

[39] Debates, CLXXXVI (July 6, 1925), col. 21.

[40] Cabinet minutes, July 8, 1925, CAB 23/50.

in China; reinforce the German opponents of the Locarno Pact who were arguing that it was a British plot to divide Germany and Russia; and intensify domestic industrial unrest.[41]

On July 30 a Cabinet committee decided against publishing documents highlighting Communist activity and also opposed a break.[42] The full Cabinet concurred on August 5.[43] Some dismayed Tories protested, but Chamberlain refused to back down.[44] On August 7 several backbenchers asked the government to honor the "mandate" given by the electorate the year before. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ronald McNeill conceded that "Russian intrigue is creating great difficulties and making much mischief in China," but he minimized the long-term effects.[45]

After interest in China slackened, Tory papers concentrated on Communist infiltration of trade unions. Some

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[41] Chamberlain to Baldwin, July 24, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/35.

[42] Minute by Chamberlain, July 30, 1925, Ibid.

[43] Cabinet minutes, Aug. 5, 1925, CAB 23/50. Tory backbenchers also were deeply concerned with Communist agents; see Debates, CLXXXIV (May 28, 1925), cols. 1695-1712.

[44] Sir Philip Richardson (Tory backbencher) to Chamberlain, July 30, 1925, Chamberlain to Richardson, July 30, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/692.

[45] For the speeches and the reply, see Debates, CLXXXVII (Aug. 7, 1925), cols. 1811-18, 1823-29, 1829-36.

papers only publicized the goals of the Minority Movement.[46] But rabidly anti-Bolshevik journals like the Daily Mail exclaimed, "The government should say unmistakably now to these British and Russian brigands, 'Hands Up'!"[47] A few Cabinet ministers, including Birkenhead, Salisbury, and Churchill, disregarded Chamberlain's plea for moderate speeches.[48] The President of the Board of Trade, Philip Cunliffe-Lister, summarized their remarks when he stated, "The trade union movement is now in the hands of men who do the bidding of their Moscow masters."[49] The issue also dominated the October meeting of the Annual Conservative Conference. A. V. Davies, M.P., was cheered when he declared that "the direct cause of all the political and industrial trouble" in England was the Communist agitation "fostered and led from Moscow."[50]

Attention soon was focused on Locarno, Switzerland

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[46] The Times, Sept. 10, p. 13, Sept. 28, 1925, p. 15; Spectator, CXXXV (Sept. 5, 1925), 356-58.

[47] Daily Mail, Sept. 12, 1925, p. 8. See also National Review, LXXXV (August, 1925), 797-99.

[48] The Times, July 20, p. 14, July 30, p. 9, Sept. 17, 1925, p. 14. On Sept. 17, 1925, p. 13, The Times stated that it was "high time" a government minister like Churchill let the people know that the country would not tolerate any "Bolshevik monkey business." On Oct. 25, 1925, p. 12, the Observer asked these "rampant" Conservatives to restrain themselves.

[49] The Times, Sept. 14, 1925, p. 14.

[50] Conservative Conference Minutes, 1925, pp. 7-9.

where European statesmen had gathered to sign a series of multilateral peace pacts designed to end the chronic post-war instability.[51] As the outsider looking in, Russia charged that Locarno was a British scheme to isolate her by coaxing Germany into the Western orbit. Before the treaties were initialed on October 16, Chicherin went to Berlin in a vain attempt to dissuade Germany from signing. There he accused Britain of organizing a new European bloc against Russia.[52]

A few Tories seemed to agree with Chicherin. The Morning Post claimed Soviet propaganda was "forcing Western Europe into a new unity, of which Locarno is no doubt a symptom." William Ormsby-Gore, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, stated that Germany was abandoning Russia to "throw in its lot with the Western Party."[53] Most Tory papers, however, denied the Soviet allegation. Although admitting that Locarno would "do no good to the Muscovite rulers," the Spectator retorted, "We are genuinely intent upon peace." The Times stated that it was "most desirable"

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[51] For the Locarno negotiations, see Northedge, The Troubled Giant, pp. 248-72.

[52] E.g., his comments during an October 2 press conference in Soviet Documents, II, 57-58, and Lord Crewe (ambassador to France) to Chamberlain, Nov. 29, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/236.

[53] Morning Post, Nov. 20, 1925, p. 10; The Times, Oct. 26, 1925, p. 8.

for Russia to join in the pacification of Europe, but "the difficulty is that Bolshevism and stability are antagonistic." The Observer felt a "Locarno for Russia" could come shortly.[54]

Anxious to dispel Soviet fears, Chamberlain told Rakovsky, "There is not an atom of foundation for these suspicions." When Rakovsky mentioned the ministers' anti-Bolshevik speeches, Chamberlain denied a Cabinet rift. Britain had "ample grounds" to justify a break, but he hoped to avoid it: "Sooner or later the Soviet Government would discover its mistake and become aware that it had more need of us than we had of it."[55] During the debate on the Locarno Pacts MacDonald cited Ormsby-Gore's speech as evidence of the government's anti-Soviet bias. The Under-Secretary's unsatisfactory explanation forced Chamberlain to reaffirm his stand.[56] Two Conservative backbenchers stated that Russia was excluded from Locarno because of her policy of undermining Western civilization. But Duff Cooper asked for a Locarno-type agreement with the Soviets, even though it "may be heretical in this party."[57]

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[54] Spectator, CXXXV (Oct. 10, 1925), 577, (Dec. 19, 1925), 1126; The Times, Oct. 2, 1925, p. 13; Observer, Oct. 25, 1925, p. 12.

[55] Chamberlain to Peters (consul in Moscow), Nov. 5, 1925, British Documents, ser. 1a, I, (London, 1966), pp. 101-3.

[56] For the statements of Ormsby-Gore and Chamberlain. see Debates, CLXXXVIII (Nov. 18, 1925), cols. 438-40, 522-23.

[57] Ibid., cols. 492-93, 506-7, 462-64.

Chamberlain's repeated denials must be taken at face value. Although he explained once that a closer union between Germany and Russia "boded ill for the peace of Europe," he was not terribly disturbed by their friendship.[58] When the Rapallo Treaty was renewed in April, 1926, he did not object because it did not violate Germany's other obligations.[59] Nevertheless, Soviet discomfiture over Locarno pleased the government. Several British diplomats predicted an imminent change in Russian foreign policy.[60] On October 23 Chamberlain alerted the Cabinet. He was especially gratified by Rakovsky's restraint during an interview on November 5. That afternoon he wrote Churchill: "Russia is finding out, as I anticipated she should, that it has more need of us and Europe than we have of it." He believed that continued "aloofness" would produce even

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[58] Charles Petrie, Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain (London, 1939-40), II, 249.

[59] Chamberlain to H.M. Representatives at Prague, et al., May 3, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, I, 704-7. Most Conservative papers reacted calmly to this treaty. The Times, April 28, 1926, p. 17, expressed apprehension over some of the terms, but the Spectator, CXXXVI (April 24, 1926), 748, believed "there seems to be less cause for alarm than ever." The Saturday Review, CXLI (May 1, 1926), 558, agreed, "We doubt whether the Russo-German Treaty would frighten anybody."

[60] Lord D'Abernon (ambassador to Germany) to Chamberlain, Oct. 17, Nov. 8, 1925, and Peters to Chamberlain, Oct. 23, 1925, British Documents, ser. 1a, I, 26-29, 113-15, 45-46.

better results.[61]

However, his policy received an apparent setback when twelve leading British Communists were indicted in October under the Incitement to Mutiny Act. The Home Secretary admitted later that he and the Attorney General had acted without Cabinet approval. One historian has called the trial "one of the rare political witch hunts in modern British history."[62] Indeed, throughout the proceedings it was obvious that the defendants were on trial for their political utterances. Perhaps with the Campbell case in mind, Joynson-Hicks was determined to secure a conviction.[63] The twelve were found guilty in late November and sentenced to prison. Conservative journals agreed that they had overstepped the bounds of free speech.[64] The Unionist Central Office celebrated by printing a pamphlet on Communist sedition.[65] Winston Churchill announced that the government

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61 Cabinet minutes, Oct. 23, 1925, CAB 23/51; Chamberlain to Churchill, Nov. 5, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/171. See also a memorandum by Gregory, Nov. 1, 1925, FO 418/64.

62 Middlemas, ed., Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary, II, 331. Middlemas makes the remark.

63 For his activities during the trial, see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 218.

64 The Times, Nov. 26, 1925, p. 17; Daily Mail, Nov. 26, 1925, p. 8; Daily Telegraph, Nov. 26, 1925, p. 10; Spectator, CXXXV (Dec. 5, 1925), 1011-13.

65 The Communist Prosecutions (London, 1925), pamphlet no. 2617. Sir Douglas Hogg's summation of the government's

now was preparing to defend the country against the "band of cosmopolitan conspirators gathered from the underworlds of the great cities of Europe and America."[66] On December 1 Labour introduced a censure motion. A freewheeling exchange of wild accusations highlighted the debate. Although supported by many Liberals, the motion was defeated handily.[67]

After the Communist trial Conservatives generally turned from the Russian issue. For the next five months an uneasy calm was broken only by a few anti-Soviet speeches.[68] Disgruntled Tory backbenchers once forced a debate over alleged violations of the Trade Agreement. Paradoxically, the Home Secretary tried to sober them by insisting that he would not be a party to a Red scare campaign.[69] In the Tory press, too, interest in propaganda waned. The Times deduced, "Russia's revolutionary effort

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case was reprinted by the far-right Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union; see Viscount Hailsham, The Communist Conspiracy (London, 1925).

[66] The Times, Nov. 30, 1925, p. 7.

[67] For the speeches of Joynson-Hicks and other Conservatives, see Debates, CLXXXIII (Dec. 1, 1925), cols. 2087-2103, 2125-35, 2145-53, 2157-64, 2171-84.

[68] A speech by Joynson-Hicks on March 16, 1926 was reprinted by the Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union; see, William Joynson-Hicks, Socialism and Communism (London, 1926).

[69] Debates, CXCIV (April 21, 1926), cols. 1301-50.

all over the world is weakening as a result of its constant failure."[70]

Throughout this period diplomatic relations were strained. In private interviews with Foreign Office officials in December, 1925, Soviet diplomats were told again that talks would not be resumed until they stopped propaganda and recognized all British claims.[71] In February, 1926 Chamberlain reviewed his policy with satisfaction, again reasoning that "the wiser members of the Soviet Government see the necessity for a change of policy." He claimed that Britain's "patience" already had been rewarded by a diminution of Soviet propaganda in the Far East.[72]

However, Chamberlain had to tread warily as the Soviets deepened their involvement in Britain's mushrooming industrial crisis. The Cabinet was particularly upset when the Profintern attempted to transfer a large sum of money to the TUC Strike Committee. The Home Secretary invoked

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[70] The Times, April 22, 1926, p. 15. See also Time and Tide, VII (March 12, 1926), 242.

[71] Minute by Mr. Mousney (head of the Northern Department), Dec. 10, 1925, and Record by Mr. Mousney of a Conversation with the Soviet chargé, Dec. 17, 1925, British Documents, ser. 1a, I, 246-48, 261-62.

[72] Memorandum by Chamberlain, Feb. 16, 1926, FO 371/11789. See also Chamberlain to H.M. Representatives in Moscow, et al., April 12, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, I, 601-3.

emergency powers to prevent the move, but the TUC refused the money anyway. Several ministers were convinced that the Soviet embassy served as an intermediary between the Comintern and the extremists in the Labour movement.[73] Tory backbenchers questioned these activities, but Chamberlain tried to minimize their impact. On February 26, for example, he stated that Britain did not offer a "favourable field for Soviet activity."[74]

In private he followed the same course. On April 13 The Times' Riga correspondent reported that the Comintern was planning greater support for British miners, who were then negotiating with mine owners. At a Cabinet meeting the next day some ministers asked for a protest note based on the report, but Chamberlain replied that the Soviets always had declined responsibility for Comintern activities.[75] Foreign Office officials also advised a note, but Chamberlain again resisted. Although "it is not so easy to stomach this stuff," he believed that a protest would "leave us in an undignified position."[76] When the King's private

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[73] James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, pp. 227-28; Henry Taylor, Jix, Viscount Brentford (London, 1933), pp. 194-95.

[74] Debates, CXCII (Feb. 24, 1926), cols. 492-93. See also CXCIV (April 21, 1926), col. 1183.

[75] Cabinet minutes, April 14, 1926, extracts reprinted in FO 371/11794.

[76] Minute by Chamberlain, April 14, 1926, Ibid.

secretary inquired about the article, Chamberlain answered that Riga was "a regular factory of lies."[77]

The Foreign Secretary also refused to involve Britain in anti-Bolshevik plots dreamed up in far-right circles on the Continent. One such scheme came to his attention in April. Retired German General Max Hoffmann hoped to organize a European army for an invasion of Russia. Hoffmann's intermediary, Sir Henry Deterding, the fanatically anti-Soviet head of Royal Dutch Petroleum, approached Joynson-Hicks to sound the government's reaction. Chamberlain refused to see Hoffmann if he came to Britain. Deterding and Hoffmann did travel secretly to London, where they apparently met with Oliver Locker-Lampson, a leading "rightist" backbencher.[78] Another of Hoffmann's emissaries urged Britain to create an anti-Soviet bloc in the Baltic area. Chamberlain dismissed the suggestion with

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[77]Chamberlain to Stamfordham, April 14, 1926, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 53/285.

[78]The affair caused a momentary stir in 1929 when it was alleged--mistakenly--that Hoffmann had visited Godfrey Locker-Lampson, newly appointed Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and brother of Oliver. For the Hoffmann episode, see Sir William Tyrrell (Permanent Under-Secretary) to Lord D'Abernon, April 1, 1926, FO 371/11788; H. Scott (Home Office civil servant) to C. W. Orde (Foreign Office civil servant), Feb. 15, 1929, and other materials in FO 371/14029. For Deterding's activities in the 1920's, see Louis Fischer, Oil Imperialism (New York, 1926).

contempt, "We won't touch it with a barge pole."[79] The Foreign Secretary occasionally went to great lengths to dispel Soviet fears. In January, 1926, through his intercession, the Cabinet permitted a British armament firm to supply Russia with coastal defense vessels and submarine mines. Previously the government had refused to sanction a similar contract.[80] Chamberlain believed his diplomatic policy would weaken Soviet intransigence. He followed basically the same approach in trade relations.

Trade Relations

Through the spring of 1925 the government paid little attention to Anglo-Soviet commerce. Labour urged an extension of trade facilities, but the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Walter Guinness, would not hear of it until the Soviets "established such conditions in the treatment of debts or compensation for confiscated property as will restore confidence and command credit."[81] However, the Cabinet did allow British creditors to negotiate privately with the Soviets.[82] A delegation from the

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[79] Memorandum by M. Palariet (civil servant at the Foreign Office), July 28, 1926, minute by Chamberlain, July 29, 1926, FO 371/11802.

[80] Cabinet minutes, Jan. 29, 1926, CAB 23/52.

[81] Debates, CLXXXIII (May 12, 1925), col. 1631.

[82] Cabinet minutes, April 8, 1925, CAB 23/49.

Association of British Creditors of Russia meeting with Under-Secretary Ronald McNeill applauded British policy.[83]

Statistics supported the government's contention that trade never would approach Labour's predictions. British exports and re-exports to Russia in 1923 had totaled £ 4.3 million, one-seventh of the figure for 1913. Due mainly to an increase in re-exports, it had jumped to £ 11.1 million in 1924. Exports that year had totaled a mere £ 3.9 million, less than one-fourth of the amount in 1913. Moreover, British imports from Russia had totaled £ 19.8 million, giving the Soviets a favorable trade balance of £ 8.8 million.

But in the first six months of 1925 British exports and re-exports increased to £ 9.4 million, nearly equal to the total for 1924. Although still small it was attained despite strained political relations; and exports to other countries continued to lag.[84] The Soviets used these latest statistics to bolster their request for trade credits. In July Rakovsky tempted British firms with an offer to order £ 15 million of machinery if Russia received credits.[85] He complained to Chamberlain that British policy

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[83] The Times, March 14, 1925, p. 17.

[84] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 215.

[85] See his statement in the Observer, Nov. 8, 1925, p. 7.

was causing some industrial firms and banks to hesitate in dealing with Russia. Chamberlain denied interfering with private business ventures, stressing, "The more trade there was between the two countries, the better I should be pleased." But he offered no help.[86] In August a Soviet trade delegation placed only six small orders with Lancashire firms. The disgruntled Soviets charged that bankers had hindered negotiations by refusing to grant needed credits.[87]

The Labour party also was disappointed. In June a TUC delegation asked Baldwin, Chamberlain, and Cunliffe-Lister for credits to reduce unemployment. Baldwin replied that Russia had never been important commercially, and Cunliffe-Lister explained that credits would not necessarily increase trade.[88] Several Labour delegations recently returned from Russia reported that the Soviets were desperate for foreign economic assistance.[89] In September J. R. Clynes ridiculed British policy.[90] In response some Tory backbenchers charged that Soviet duplicity was the

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[86] Chamberlain to Hodgson, July 13, 1925, FO 371/11016.

[87] The Times, Aug. 22, p. 10, Sept. 5, p. 7, Sept. 12, 1925, p. 14.

[88] Ibid., June 24, 1925, p. 10.

[89] Ibid., July 6, p. 9, Oct. 19, 1925, p. 14.

[90] Ibid., Sept. 3, 1925, p. 15.

chief obstacle to increased trade.[91] Others said credits would follow a debt settlement, and a few agreed with Lord Sydenham's moral objections to trade.[92] The Observer was the only Tory newspaper to recommend credits: most agreed with the Saturday Review that the Soviets' recent trade agitation was "clumsy bribery."[93] The business community and the Association of British Creditors of Russia concurred.[94] Under-Secretary Ronald McNeill emphasized that the government was "anxious" to increase trade, but the Soviets' foreign trade monopoly, propaganda, and debt repudiation were stumbling blocks.[95] However, the final statistics for 1925 strengthened Labour's case. Britain imported £ 25 million of goods from Russia and exported £ 19 million, almost doubling the export figure for the previous year.

On February 22, 1926 the government proposed minor changes in the Trade Facilities Act. During the debate some

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[91] Ibid., Aug. 25, p. 11, Aug. 28, 1925, p. 13.

[92] Ibid., Sept. 1, p. 3, Sept. 9, p. 8, Sept. 11, p. 8, Sept. 21, 1925, p. 8.

[93] Observer, Aug. 16, 1925, p. 8; Saturday Review, CXL (July 18, 1925), 61; The Times, Dec. 15, 1925, p. 15; Morning Post, Jan. 5, 1926, p. 10.

[94] The Times, July 22, p. 10, Sept. 4, 1925, p. 12.

[95] Debates, CLXXXVII (Aug. 7, 1925), cols. 1829-35. See also Chamberlain to Churchill, Nov. 5, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/171.

Opposition M.P.'s charged that all Russo-British contracts had been excluded from the Act by decree. Ronald McNeill conceded that the Trade Facilities Committee had rejected, "on the ground of security," every application involving Russia.[96] Other Opposition speakers then criticized the well-known omission of Russia from the Export Credits Scheme. Apparently unprepared for their arguments, the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department, A. M. Samuel, offered a weak defense, claiming that the Soviets had bought non-British goods with their annual trade balance.[97]

On March 1 the trade issue was debated in detail when the government asked for a supplementary sum for the Export Credits Scheme. In moving a reduction Labour speakers noted that the Soviets, who had promptly met every bill since 1917, would rebuild their country even without foreign assistance. In sum, their exclusion from the Scheme was indefensible. Walter Runciman, a Liberal M.P. and leading London banker, explained that five of the largest banks were guaranteeing contracts between British traders and the Soviet Trade Commissariat.[98] A. M. Samuel again opposed government guarantees for Russian contracts. Joynson-Hicks added that

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[96] Debates, CXCII (Feb. 22, 1926), col. 235.

[97] Ibid., cols. 240-45.

[98] For these speeches, see Ibid., CXCII (March 1, 1926), cols. 1105-6, 1109-10, 1113.

traders could seek private credits until the Soviets altered their economic and legal systems.[99]

Two Tory backbenchers supported the government.[100] However, six dissented. Harold Macmillan and Oliver Stanley, young progressives specializing in economic affairs, charged that Samuel's fallacious arguments were politically motivated. T. J. O'Connor said that it was "disastrous" for Conservatives, "the party of expediency," to reject Soviet applications without first considering their merits.[101] Representing Scottish constituencies whose economy had been weakened by the postwar decline of herring exports to Russia, Robert Boothby and W. P. Templeton believed that unemployment in Scotland would be reduced if Russia could purchase herrings on credit.[102] P. J. Hannon, associated with a group of manufacturers who had extended credits to the Soviets, pleaded for a modification of the government's "cast-iron attitude."[103] The government probably was most embarrassed when a Tory member of the Export Credits Scheme's Advisory Committee, Sir Philip Pilditch, stated

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[99] Ibid., cols. 1099-1104, 1111-13, 1120-22.

[100] Ibid., cols. 1116-18, 1137-40.

[101] Ibid., cols. 1110-11, 1123, 1118.

[102] Ibid., cols. 1106, 1127-29.

[103] Ibid., cols. 1132-34.

that his group would begin to consider credits involving Russia. However, Samuel interjected that he would invoke the Russian exclusion clause to overrule the Committee.[104] The Labour amendment was defeated by a vote of 197 to 109; only 5 Conservatives, including 3 who had not spoken, sided with the Opposition.[105]

Soon after the debate the Morning Post accused the Bolsheviks of using their £15 million trade balance from the previous two years to finance revolutions, "It is like dynamite in the hands of an anarchist." The Times noted that the debate "revealed a good deal of misapprehension that is unfortunately not confined to one side of the House." A short time later it began printing stories of an economic crisis in Russia.[106] The Soviets charged that Conservative journals were trying to undermine their credit standing in Britain.[107]

On March 24 Winston Churchill seemed to soften the government's position when he remarked that if the Soviets

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[104] Ibid., cols. 1106-8.

[105] Ibid., cols. 1155-58. Speaking about Russia for the first time in years, Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck later advocated credits for Russia; see Ibid., CXCII (March 8, 1926), col. 1898.

[106] Morning Post, March 3, 1926, p. 10; The Times, March 5, p. 15, March 24, p. 15, April 12, 1926, p. 13.

[107] Soviet Union Monthly, I (May, 1926), 76. This magazine was the successor to the Russian Information and Review.

raised that debt question, "We should not treat Russia with less consideration than we have treated other debtors."[108] Describing the remark as "unexpected and welcome," J. L. Garvin foresaw a quick settlement of debts and increased trade.[109] But the government restated their standing trade policy almost immediately.[110]

Despite signs of Tory dissatisfaction the government refused to modify their position. The tradition of party unity perhaps prevented other backbenchers from joining the small group of "conciliators" who, nonetheless, attracted considerable attention. In May four Tory M.P.'s returned from Russia with a report advocating, among other things, an extension of trade credits. Chamberlain persuaded them to modify their report, but even its revised recommendations were cheered by the Opposition.[111]

Until 1925 there never had been a lengthy period of relative tranquility between Britain and Soviet Russia. But during the first eighteen months of Baldwin's second

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[108] Debates, CXCIII (March 24, 1926), col. 1251.

[109] Observer, March 28, p. 14, April 18, 1926, p. 14.

[110] Laurence Collier (civil servant at the Foreign Office) to the London Chamber of Commerce, April 6, 1926, enclosed in Chamberlain to Hodgson, April 12, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, I, 599-601.

[111] See Appendix II for the details of their visit to Russia.

government, the two Powers did not become embroiled in a serious crisis. In part this was due to Austen Chamberlain's policy of ignoring Soviet pinpricks. Although he believed that the Soviets were beginning to see the advantages of a comprehensive settlement, they seemed to be as inflexible as ever. Actually, the "tranquility" at this time was deceptive because two potentially explosive issues began to heat up at this time--turmoil in China and domestic industrial unrest. By supporting the Chinese Nationalists and the British Minority Movement, the Soviets showed they had not abandoned their revolutionary goals. Chamberlain did not--and could not--defuse either issue. Both developments troubled the Tories.

After the Tories took office in 1924, the four strands of their opinions of Russia emerged clearly once again. The "centrist" views of Chamberlain prevailed throughout this period, but he was pressured by both "conciliators" and "rightists" for differing reasons. "Conciliatory" opinions gained ground at this time among Tories outside the government, probably because British exports continued to lag. After the fall of the Coalition the political and economic aspects of Anglo-Soviet relations had been mostly separated. Thus some Tories could become "conciliators" more comfortably. Although

their numbers increased, they were not influential enough to soften the government's trade policy toward Russia.

On diplomatic policy Chamberlain faced a potentially greater threat from his party. The strong Tory reaction to the events in China and to the Minority Movement was significant. The demand by some "rightists" for a severance of diplomatic relations over these two issues was not especially alarming. But the sincere warnings given Russia by many "centrists" and "conciliators" indicated that further Soviet involvement in these two sensitive areas could not be dismissed lightly.

CHAPTER IX

INCREASING TORY PRESSURE FOR A SEVERANCE OF RELATIONS

The General Strike

Britain's seething industrial unrest boiled over on May 3 when the TUC voted to support the coal miners who had just begun a national strike. For the next nine days a general strike closed down the economic life of the country. The British public experienced their first taste of what many believed was incipient revolution. Tories especially viewed the strike as a grave threat to constitutional government. Baldwin spoke for his party when he noted that the country stood "nearer to civil war than we have been for centuries past."[1] The strike seemed to substantiate in a dramatic way the assertion of Tory "rightists" and "ultras" that Russia was working to destroy Britain. The Soviets hailed the strike as a frontal assault on the bastion of capitalism.[2] Russian trade unionists allegedly supported their striking comrades; the

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[1] Julian Symons, The General Strike: a Historical Portrait (London, 1957), p. 118.

[2] See Stalin's speech in Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, pp. 368-69. However, in private, Karl Radek called it a wage dispute and not a revolutionary movement; see Ibid., p. 136.

All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions forwarded drafts for over £ 225,000 to the TUC General Council. The Home Secretary moved to bar the funds, and on May 8 the TUC refused the offer.[3] On May 13 the general strike collapsed, but the miners held out. Between the end of May and early June the Miners' Federation accepted over £ 380,000, supposedly given voluntarily by Russian miners and other trade unionists. German miners sent over £ 20,000, and the United Mine Workers of America contributed £ 10,000.[4]

On June 3 the Cabinet decided that the offer to the TUC violated the propaganda clause of the Trade Agreement since the general strike was illegal. Chamberlain was directed to send a protest note. However, the ministers were undecided about the contributions to the miners for their strike was judged legal. Birkenhead, Churchill, and Joynson-Hicks apparently asked their colleagues to prohibit the contributions and to terminate diplomatic relations with Russia.[5]

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[3] The Times, May 10, 1926, p. 3.

[4] Ibid., June 11, 1926, p. 16.

[5] Cabinet minutes, June 3, 1926, CAB 23/53; Birkenhead to Lord Irwin (formerly Edward Wood), June 3, 1926, cited by Birkenhead, Lord Birkenhead by His Son, II, 276; Cecil to Baldwin, June 16, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, p. 130.

To avoid an argument over the status of Soviet trade unions as voluntary associations distinct from the state, Chamberlain and Sir William Tyrrell, the Permanent Under-Secretary, based the protest on a technicality which proved official Soviet complicity: in early May the Commissariat of Finance had waived a law prohibiting the export of more than 100 rubles. A short note handed to the Soviets on June 12 stated that the offer to the TUC contradicted their professed desire for a detente.[6] The Soviets denounced the note in public as an unwarranted interference in their domestic affairs, but the official reply was composed, if unrepentant.[7]

The exchange of temperate notes indicated that Chamberlain and Chicherin wanted to avoid a diplomatic crisis.[8] In fact, Chamberlain considered softening his Russian policy at this time. In May the British chargé in Moscow urged him to change his "negative" policy toward

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[6] The note was enclosed in Tyrrell to Hodgson, June 7, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, (London, 1968), pp. 85-86.

[7] Soviet Documents, II, 119. For the Soviet reaction, see The Times, June 19, 1926, p. 13, and Record by Mr. Gregory of a Conversation with M. Rosengolz (interim Soviet chargé in London), June 10, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 94-95.

[8] Chicherin apparently feared that Britain might break relations; see Hodgson to Chamberlain, June 26, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 123.

Russia because peace was endangered by her continued exclusion from Europe. Believing the Soviets finally desired a settlement, Hodgson advocated a resumption of negotiations and an extension of export credits.[9] The Foreign Secretary read the note with "great interest." On May 24 he ordered the Foreign Office to prepare "a dispatch for consideration setting forth wherein the draft 1924 treaty must be modified as a basis for any renewed negotiations."[10] However, the study was never made as a new wave of anti-Bolshevik Tory invective soon appeared.

In May the Soviet contributions to the strikers were ignored in public by most Tories. The Daily Mail was largely responsible for turning the matter into a national issue. Beginning on May 27 and continuing every day for nearly two weeks, it printed editorials accusing the Soviets of trying to destroy the country by sending money to the miners. In increasingly abusive language it told the government that industrial peace would return only after the Bolshevik plotters were expelled.[11]

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[9] Hodgson to Chamberlain, May 6, 1926, Ibid., ser. 1a, I, 724-30.

[10] Minute by Chamberlain, May 24, 1926, FO 371/11786.

[11] Daily Mail, May 27-June 9, 1926. See also National Review, LXXXVII (June, 1926), 508. This campaign perhaps helped to bring the matter to the Cabinet's attention on June 3.

Until June 9 other Conservative newspapers and politicians said little. But that evening Lord Birkenhead charged that the funds were compulsory levies sent "to foment revolution in this country."[12] When Joynson-Hicks was asked about Russia's role in the strike during a tumultuous session of Commons the next day, he replied that the investigation was not complete. But when pressed by MacDonald he blurted out: "His Majesty's Government are satisfied--that money has been sent from Russia, including some money from the Russian Government, for the purposes of the general strike."[13] Foreign Under-Secretary Godfrey Locker-Lampson explained later to Chamberlain that he was trying to outline the Soviets' role for Joynson-Hicks when, in the midst of the turmoil, he "went a little beyond what I had tried to tell him."[14]

The statements by Birkenhead and Joynson-Hicks roused the Tories. The Daily Mail adopted a new line of attack: "Somewhere there is some influence holding back the British government, inspiring it with a tenderness for the Bolsheviks and their interests." Chamberlain was thought

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[12] Morning Post, June 10, 1926, p. 12.

[13] Debates, CXCVI (June 10, 1926), col. 1676.

[14] Godfrey Locker-Lampson to Chamberlain, June 13, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 96, n. 3.

to be the culprit.[15] For several weeks the Daily Mail printed numerous letters in full length double columns. A note from Tory backbencher Guy Kindersley was typical: "The criminal camarilla called the Soviet Government . . . is tapping the roots which nourish and control the Communist conspiracy which is destroying our industry, corrupting our youth, and working for revolution."[16] On June 14 a delegation of "leading" Tory backbenchers requested an immediate interview with the Prime Minister to urge a break.[17] However, most Conservative papers awaited a lead from the government before passing judgment on relations.[18]

On June 16 the Cabinet reviewed the Soviet reply and statements from TUC officials who denied receiving Russian funds. Joynson-Hicks presented a memorandum asking for decisions on diplomatic relations and on Soviet funds for the miners' strike. In a second paper he cited examples of Comintern infiltration of the trade union movement. No

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[15] Daily Mail, June 15, 1926, p. 8. See also Daily Mail, June 10-June 14, 1926.

[16] Ibid., June 24, 1926, p. 8. See also the letters from backbenchers Charles Foxcroft, Philip Richardson, Alan Burgoyne, Alfred Knox, Victor Cazalet, and Henry Burton in Ibid., June 9-June 16, 1926.

[17] Ibid., June 14, 1926, p. 9.

[18] The Times, June 18, 1926, p. 15; Western Mail, June 12, 1926, p. 6; Saturday Review, CXLI (June 19, 1926), 735. Spectator, CXXXVI (June 19, 1926), 1029; Morning Post, June 15, 1926, p. 10. The National Review, LXXXVII (June, 1926), 515, wanted a break.

agreement had been reached when the meeting was adjourned.[19] Later that evening the Cabinet was given a Foreign Office memorandum which reviewed the intimate ties linking the Soviet government with the Profintern and the Comintern. It charged that much of the £380,000 sent to the miners probably came from the government since Russian workers could not have donated such a large sum. However, the Foreign Office believed a break would disrupt trade and intensify Soviet propaganda. Moreover, the Soviets would be oblivious to the political and economic consequences: "The Bolshevik mind does not attach the same degree of importance to material considerations as we do ourselves." In fact, they would be delighted to see British leaders thrown into a panic.[20] The memorandum apparently impressed the Cabinet. Each minister stated that a break would be a justifiable retaliation for the Soviets' "malignant hostility."

> But, taking into consideration the many disturbing factors in Europe at the present time; the credit commitments of British firms to Russia on the strength

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[19] Cabinet minutes, 11:30 A.M., June 16, 1926, CAB 23/53. Memorandums by Joynson-Hicks, June 11, June 15, 1926, CAB 24/180.

[20] Memorandum by the Foreign Office, June 16, 1926, CAB 24/180. The Assistant Secretary, J. D. Gregory, had previously reasoned in much the same vein but added, "If there was any reason to believe that the present regime would fall as a result of a rupture of relations, there might be some sense in such action"; see memorandum by Gregory, June 11, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 98.

> of the recent Government assurances that no early change in policy was likely; the increase in trade with Russia; the bearing of a rupture on unemployment and on the miners' strike; and the difficulty of re-establishing relations when once broken off; a large majority of the Cabinet felt that the moment was not opportune for a rupture of diplomatic relations, and that, on a long view of the situation, any immediate political advantages to be obtained thereby would soon be outweighed by practical disadvantages.

The Cabinet also decided not to prohibit Russian funds for the miners, "since such action could easily be misrepresented." Perhaps to mollify the minority they resolved "to enlighten the public as to the menacing character of the Soviet Government's policy towards this country."[21] Cecil probably hit on the essential reason for the outcome, "By all means let us avoid being rushed."[22] Austen Chamberlain won the battle but feared losing the war. He admitted in private:

> It has been difficult to pursue this policy of patience and forbearance in face of their constant provocation, and I cannot say that what has been difficult in the past may not be made impossible by the Soviet Government which recognises none of the obligations of international society as if it were an ordinary member of the comity of nations. There is ample justification for breaking off relations: the only question is, and will remain, whether it is worth our while to do so. For the

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[21]Cabinet minutes, 6:00 P.M., June 16, 1926, CAB 23/53.

[22]Cecil to Baldwin, June 16, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, p. 130. Neville Chamberlain also opposed a break; see Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain, p. 154.

> moment, I think it is not, but I cannot speak with confidence as to the future.[23]

In announcing the Cabinet's decision on June 17, Balfour envisioned "no substantial advantages" from the rupture desired by "so many of my friends." Most important, it would be "the height of rashness" to disturb international relations any further. He concluded:

> Therefore, until it can be shown that some clear advantage is obtained by an alteration of our formal relations with Russia, I am in favour of leaving things as they are, having quite explicitly explained to anybody who cares to listen to our explanations that we are not dupes of Russian policy, having made it perfectly clear that we know what they desire, why they desire it, how they intend to aim at it, by what means they intend to attain it.[24]

The Daily Mail apparently was the only newspaper to disagree with the government.[25] But at least two ministers expressed their displeasure in public. Churchill accused Soviet "miscreants" and their "featherheaded hirelings" of working to reduce Britain to the dimensions of their own "ignorant slave state." Amid great cheering he continued:

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[23] Chamberlain to Lord Emmott (Liberal leader), June 22, 1926, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 53/262.

[24] Lords Debates, LXIV (June 17, 1926), cols. 465-74.

[25] Daily Mail, June 18, 1926, p. 8. For a typical favorable comment, see Daily Telegraph, June 18, 1926, p. 10.

> I am sure it would give a great deal of satisfaction if they were thrown out. Personally, I hope I shall live to see the day when either there will be a civilized Government in Russia or that we shall have ended the present pretence of friendly relations with men who are seeking our overthrow.

He also warned British traders not to expect the Treasury to intervene in their behalf for uncollected bills if diplomatic or commercial ties were severed. On the same evening Birkenhead claimed that the government would be forced to retaliate if the Bolsheviks did not change.[26]

The two speeches produced a speedy reaction. The Daily Express believed Churchill's language "was such as would draw a protest from any other Government in the world." In his weekly column in the Spectator, "New Member" (probably Robert Boothby, M.P.) was shocked to hear two ministers disagreeing with official policy: "Mr. Gladstone would have made short work of them." The writer believed their strong personalities explained their successful defiance.[27] Although Birkenhead admitted that several Cabinet colleagues opposed his vituperative language, he claimed that it was a necessary part of his campaign to discredit the "Moscow disciple," A. J. Cook, leftist leader

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[26] For both speeches, see The Times, June 21, 1926, p. 8.

[27] Daily Express, June 21, 1926, cited by Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, pp. 165-66; Spectator, CXXXVI (June 26, 1926), 1072.

of the Miners' Federation.[28]

The Cabinet's exposition of the Soviet threat also received a harsh response in some quarters. On June 23 the government published a Blue Book containing more than fifty documents confiscated the previous October during the raid on British Communist party headquarters.[29] Some of the evidence purportedly established a link with the Soviet Trade Delegation, but many documents were concerned with the party's perilous financial state. Others attacked the Labour party. Labourite Arthur Ponsonby described the collection as "a monument of official imbecility." Lloyd George agreed that British Communists sought assistance from Russia; but instead of asking for poison gas or machine guns, they requested "one poor typist."[30] Tory politicians and some newspapers apparently did not defend the publication of the documents, but the Morning Post and The Times believed the revelations underscored the subordination of domestic Communists to Moscow.[31]

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[28] Birkenhead to Irwin, June 24, 1926, cited by Birkenhead, Lord Birkenhead by His Son, II, 278.

[29] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Home Office), Cmnd. 2682, "Communist Papers: Documents Selected from Those Obtained on the Arrest of the Communist Leaders on the 14th and the 21st October, 1925," (London, 1926).

[30] Debates, CXCVII (June 25, 1926), cols. 711, 725-27.

[31] Morning Post, June 26, 1926, p. 10; The Times, June 25, 1926, p. 15. See also Daily Mail, June 25, 1926, p. 8.

The promised Commons debate on Russia was postponed from June 17 to June 25, apparently to allow tempers to cool. But in the meantime, eighteen backbenchers, probably encouraged by the speeches of the two ministers and by the publication of the Communist papers, put down a motion calling for a break with Russia. Oliver Locker-Lampson started the debate on June 25 criticizing the government's decision to table the motion. Besides rehashing wartime examples of Bolshevik treachery, he pointed toward the gallery to a man "whom these monsters deprived of sight." The government's callous disregard of the election mandate, he continued, had led to a continuing influx of Soviet propaganda and stolen gold.

> How much longer are we going to cuddle up to these cormorants, and take our marching orders from Moscow? The time has come to withdraw this monstrous monopoly and to cease making free-born Englishmen the helots of a slave-state.[32]

Alfred Knox characterized the Trade Agreement as "the most immoral" act in English history: "Until we get rid of this Soviet sore . . . we shall have continual industrial strife in this country."[33] Other Conservative speakers quoted from Izvestia and Pravda to prove the Soviets' revolutionary goals.[34]

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[32] Debates, CXCVII (June 25, 1926), cols. 699-708.

[33] Ibid., cols. 715-20.

[34] Ibid., cols. 741-43, 757-63.

Two Conservatives supported the government. E. Hilton Young, a former Liberal, predicted that a break merely would drive Communist propaganda underground. Sir Frank Nelson, a recent visitor to Russia, added that other nations then would benefit from the anticipated increase in trade with Russia.[35] Labour speakers requested new negotiations with the Soviets.[36]

Chamberlain charged that Russian funds were intended to incite revolution, but he stated that a break would intensify domestic and foreign unrest. He concluded that relations would not even be "correct" until Russia conformed to international conduct.[37] The debate was interrupted frequently as speakers from both benches hurled wild accusations. After Chamberlain sat down, the Deputy-Speaker adjourned the proceedings when a number of Tories and Labourites crossed the floor to exchange blows.

Many Tory papers applauded the Foreign Secretary's lucid reasoning, but they also suggested that his Tory critics had presented formidable arguments.[38] Some

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[35] Ibid., cols. 727-32, 752-57.

[36] E.g., MacDonald's speech in cols. 763-69.

[37] Ibid., cols. 769-77.

[38] The Times, June 26, 1926, p. 15; Daily Telegraph, June 26, 1926, p. 10; Saturday Review, CXLI (June 26, 1926), 765; Spectator, CXXXVII (July 3, 1926), 4-5; English Review, XLIII (July, 1926), 18-22.

"rightist" and "ultra" journals were dismayed by Chamberlain's policy.[39] Several Cabinet members, including Hoare, Amery, and Cunliffe-Lister, defended him.[40] Even Joynson-Hicks asked his constituents to be patient for a few months.[41]

Pravda attacked the "Churchills, Birkenheads, and Locker-Lampsons" and boasted that a break would be disastrous for Britain. However, Hodgson reported that the Soviets hoped to repair the diplomatic damage.[42] On July 13 Chamberlain told M. Rosengolz, the interim Soviet chargé, that new negotiations would be "useless." He again denied a Cabinet rift and concluded the interview by saying that he wanted to avoid a break "if possible," even though Britain had never tolerated such abuse.[43] His choice of words indicated a serious deterioration of relations as a result of the general strike.

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[39] Daily Mail, June 26, 1926, p. 8; National Review, LXXXVII (July, 1926), 641-45; Morning Post, June 26, 1926, p. 10.

[40] The Times, June 24, p. 18, June 28, p. 8, July 12, 1926, p. 9.

[41] Ibid., June 29, 1926, p. 18.

[42] Ibid., June 30, 1926, p. 15; Hodgson to Chamberlain, July 2, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 133-35.

[43] Chamberlain to Hodgson, July 13, 1926, "A Selection of Papers," pp. 42-45. The next day Chamberlain told the Cabinet how much the Soviets distrusted Britain's intentions; see Cabinet minutes, July 14, 1926, CAB 23/53.

After previous Anglo-Soviet crises, "ultra" and "rightist" Tories did not sustain public interest in the Soviet question. But now they were determined to keep it in the press headlines. In late June a group of these backbenchers set up a committee to monitor violations of the Trade Agreement. The members included such prominent anti-Bolsheviks as Oliver Locker-Lampson, Richard Barnett, Philip Richardson, Alfred Knox, and John Gretton. According to one report a majority of their colleagues were sympathetic.[44] Using an appropriate title, the "Clear Out the Reds Campaign," the backbenchers staged a mass meeting at the Royal Albert Hall on July 15. The audience of 7,000 included over 80 M.P.'s, many peers, and representatives from Conservative-dominated patriotic organizations. In his welcoming remarks John Gretton emphasized that an expulsion of the Bolsheviks would establish a world-wide precedent. Backbenchers Hamar Greenwood, Mitchell Banks, and Oliver Locker-Lampson followed with anti-Bolshevik tirades. According to the latter:

> We permit the scum of our own gutter and the outpouring of every foreign sink to collect weekly in our parks and to assail all that we love most without let or hindrance. . . . I am tired of hearing the Soviets referred to by His Majesty's Ministers as a friendly state, and sick to death of the diplomatic slobber with which we fawn upon those fiends.

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[44] The Times, June 28, 1926, p. 8; Spectator, CXXXVII (July 3, 1926), 7.

The audience responded with wild cheering. A young woman who objected to Locker-Lampson's invective was ejected amid roars of approval.[45]

The same "rightist" and "ultra" zealots held an outdoor meeting in September where Locker-Lampson predicted another general strike unless the Reds were "driven into the sea"; the first one had resulted from "our toadying to Moscow."[46] A month later they returned to the Royal Albert Hall.[47] Occasionally they spoke before smaller gatherings.[48] Several pointed to trade statistics to bolster their arguments. Alfred Knox contrasted Britain's postwar Russian trade deficit, £22 million, with the £28 million balance held by the United States, reasoning that the similar figures proved that Britain's purchases from Russia financed Soviet trade with the United States. Since the United States had no agreements with Russia, he

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[45] The Times, July 16, 1926, p. 6; Daily Telegraph, July 16, 1926, p. 10. A copy of the resolution sent to the Prime Minister can be found in FO 371/11787. For a favorable editorial comment, see Morning Post, July 16, 1926, p. 10.

[46] The Times, Sept. 17, 1926, p. 14. The word "zealots" refers to those Tories who advocated a break with Russia in 1926 and 1927. Naturally most were "ultras" and "rightists."

[47] Ibid., Oct. 16, 1926, p. 9. For extracts from Locker-Lampson's speech, see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 245-46.

[48] For Henry Page Croft's speech to a Conservative group, see The Times, Oct. 14, 1926, p. 12.

concluded that Britain should cancel hers in order to corner a larger share of the Russian market.[49]

The Annual Conservative Conference held in early October gave the zealots a chance to test party sentiment. Guy Kindersley asked the delegates to back the government "in any steps they may take to end this menace to our freedom and stability." William Bull resolved that the government should terminate all ties with Russia. Both motions were carried unanimously. Locker-Lampson cried, "England is gagged and bound while the enemy spits in her face and stabs her in the back." The delegates rose to their feet waving their agenda papers.[50]

Gradually the zealots received support from prominent Tory leaders. In a widely publicized letter to his constituents, Joynson-Hicks warned that Russia was planning another general strike.[51] He prohibited some meetings of

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[49] The Times, July 19, 1926, p. 13. See also a letter from Guy Kindersley in Ibid., July 1, 1926, p. 12, and National Review, LXXXVII (August, 1926), 826-28. The fallacies in these arguments were clear to the government; as a civil servant noted, "It is one thing to trade with a country with whose government you have had no relations and quite another to carry on business with a Power with whom you have just had a row"; see minute by Alvery Gascoigne, July 22, 1926, FO 371/11777.

[50] Conservative Conference Minutes, 1926, pp. 23,25.

[51] The Times, Aug. 17, 1926, p. 7. The letter was reprinted by the Conservative Central Office under the title, Communist Plotting (London, 1926), pamphlet no. 2673. See also Robert Horne's exhortation in The Times, Nov. 18, 1926, p. 16.

leftist groups and the Communist party on the ground that public peace was endangered. In November Labour M.P.'s denounced his action as an illegal suppression of free speech, but the Home Secretary replied by citing the alleged Communist plot to destroy the nation.[52] His move showed clearly that Britain still was gripped by a revolutionary situation. On November 3 Lord Birkenhead repudiated Cabinet policy in public when he called Russia "a foreign Power of whom I do dispute and have disputed the right under existing conditions to be recognized in this country."[53] Several ministers spread alarmist views about Russia's military plans. At a Committee of Imperial Defence meeting on July 22, Churchill suggested a conference between the military chiefs and the Foreign Office to deal with the "ever-threatening menace to civilisation." In October Birkenhead told the Imperial Conference that Russia intended to attack India.[54] Since Britain had discounted

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[52] Debates, CXCIX (Nov. 18, 1926), cols. 2055-2108.

[53] The Times, Nov. 4, 1926, p. 16.

[54] Memorandum by Tyrrell, July 26, 1926, reprinted as a Cabinet memorandum, CAB 24/181; Earl of Birkenhead, F. E.: the Life of F. E. Smith, First Earl of Birkenhead (London, 1960), pp. 534-35. At this time Tory attention was centered on the internal power struggle in Russia, and not on Soviet expansion. Zinoviev's expulsion from the Politburo and from the presidency of the Comintern, and the sudden death of Felix Dzerzhinsky, head of the secret police, left Stalin as undisputed ruler. From Moscow Hodgson interpreted these developments to mean "a quickening in the evolutionary process and should impel the Soviet government in the direction of

any Soviet military threat after 1921, these sudden allegations probably were made in support of the "Clear out the Reds Campaign."

The Daily Mail, the Morning Post, and the National Review lined up behind the zealots.[55] Many papers agreed with Chamberlain, but even such a "conciliatory" journal as the Spectator evinced a profound mistrust of Soviet intentions. Only the Observer now advocated renewed negotiations.[56]

The anti-Bolshevik crusade strained diplomatic

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becoming more of a Russian government and less of an international conspiracy"; see Hodgson to Chamberlain, July 29, 1926, FO 371/11779. Later he cautioned against any premature hopes that the power struggle would threaten Soviet stability; see Hodgson to Chamberlain, Oct. 12, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 434-35. Chamberlain based his analysis on Hodgson's reports; see his statement to the Imperial Conference in October, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 945-47. Although most Tory papers believed Russia was embroiled in a crisis, they could not agree on its significance. The Times, Aug. 26, 1926, p. 11, predicted that Stalin would abandon the NEP and suppress his opponents because Communist party discipline had been destroyed by the "corruption of absolute power." Time and Tide, VII (Aug. 13, 1926), 732-33, and the Observer, July 11, p. 14, Oct. 17, 1926, p. 17, prophesied a total abandonment of Communist principles. The Saturday Review, CXLII (Oct. 23, 1926), 459, and the Spectator, CXXXVII (Oct. 30, 1926), 729, felt contradictory reports from Russia justified their refusal to play the role of prophet.

[55] Morning Post, Nov. 9, 1926, p. 10; Daily Mail, Nov. 3, 1926, p. 8; National Review, LXXXVIII (October, 1926), 190.

[56] Spectator, CXXXVII (Oct. 30, 1926), 728-29; Observer, Nov. 28, 1926, p. 17.

relations even further, the Soviet press charging that the Tory government supported the zealots.[57] In October the newly appointed Soviet chargé, Leonid Krassin, complained about the resolutions at the Conservative Conference. Chamberlain replied that Britain's foreign policy was enunciated only "from the lips of His Majesty's Ministers." But later in the interview he practically begged Krassin to offer strict guarantees against propaganda because "public opinion" was so aroused. Again he denied leading an anti-Soviet bloc.[58] After the interview Chamberlain wrote that the Soviets still were unrepentant. As he suspected, Krassin had been sent only to secure trade credits in the City; but he was rebuffed by bankers demanding prior debt recognition.[59]

Some government officials were troubled by the anti-Red campaign. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, pleaded with Viscount Cecil:

> For Heaven's sake stop Winston and F. E. Birkenhead from playing into the hands of the Bolsheviks by attributing to them the importance which I'm quite sure they don't possess. I imagine that every time they make speeches, the Bolsheviks in Moscow rub their hands with delight and congratulate themselves upon the great state of alarm into

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[57] Soviet Union Monthly, I (August, 1926), 147-48.

[58] Chamberlain to Hodgson, Oct. 11, 1926, FO 371/11787.

[59] Minute by Chamberlain, Oct. 25, 1926, attached to a memorandum by Gregory, Oct. 24, 1926, Ibid.

> which they have thrown the British Cabinet, wholly disproportionate to the money they have spent on the purpose.[60]

Although agreeing with the zealots' accusations, Robert Hodgson, the chargé in Moscow, criticized their outbursts. Like Irwin he claimed that the Soviets interpreted the campaign to mean that their propaganda was causing deep concern. The zealots also added credence to the Soviets' belief that Britain was conspiring to form an anti-Soviet bloc. Most important, he noted, the Soviets believed the Conservative party and the Conservative government were indistinguishable. Since they assumed that the zealots spoke with official sanction, they concluded that the Cabinet sponsored the campaign. Finally, the crusade was hurting trade.[61]

After receiving this report on November 1, Chamberlain wrote to the Prime Minister:

> There is food for reflection in this despatch and I think you ought to see it, but I do not like to circulate it to the Cabinet without knowing that you would wish that done. There are words or phrases here and there which might provoke opposition and even resentment. I doubt whether it would be helpful to circulate it exactly as it stands.

Baldwin replied that it should not be circulated in any

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[60] Irwin to Cecil, July 14, 1926, Cecil Papers, Add. MSS, 51084.

[61] Hodgson to Chamberlain, Oct. 21, 1926, FO 371/11787.

form.[62] This exchange showed that the anti-Red campaign continued, at least in part, because the Prime Minister was unwilling--or unable--to discipline those ministers who supported it.

Baldwin's desire to avoid a confrontation with the zealots indicated that they were not merely an insignificant band of "rightists" and "ultras." Although it is difficult to assess the impact of the "Clear out the Reds Campaign" within the Tory party at this time, the proceedings at the 1926 Conservative Conference suggest considerable support for their objective. Their successes, and even their formation, must be attributed to the widespread fear of revolution which the general strike produced in Britain. This fear led naturally to increased fear of Soviet Russia. Under these conditions few Tory "conciliators" could be heard. The "centrist" position also was harmed by Soviet involvement in the strike: Austen Chamberlain clearly was thrown on the defensive. Before the general strike he had convinced most Cabinet members that his policy of aloofness would lead to a settlement. Afterwards he had to work hard merely to preserve what had become a fragile diplomatic link. As always he was at the mercy of events: another Soviet provocation might lead to a severance of all ties with Russia.

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[62] Chamberlain to Baldwin, n.d., Baldwin to Chamberlain, Nov. 6, 1926, attached to Ibid.

China Again

In the summer of 1926 Chiang Kai-shek's armies launched the famous Northern Expedition against the moribund government in Peking. The advancing Nationalists stirred anti-imperialist feelings to a fever pitch. Their effective propaganda offensive was directed by Soviet advisors, including Michael Borodin. As in 1925 Britain bore the brunt of these verbal and physical attacks. Massive strikes by Chinese workers in British-owned factories resulted in a precipitous decline of Anglo-Chinese commerce.[63]

These developments produced in many British circles a panicky reaction bordering on hysteria. Alfred Knox expressed the zealots' belief, "The Canton government [the Kuomintang] remains practically under the control of Soviet missions. The key to the Chinese problem is in Moscow."[64] In the first week of December Oliver Locker-Lampson pressed Conservative Whips for a discussion of Anglo-Soviet relations. Baldwin, however, reasoned that a debate might worsen Britain's already precarious position in China.[65]

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[63] For a detailed account of Soviet involvement with the Kuomintang, see Robert North and Xenia Eudin, M. N. Roy's Mission to China: the Communist-Kuomintang Split of 1927 (Berkeley, 1963).

[64] The Times, Dec. 24, 1926, p. 11.

[65] Tyrrell to Chamberlain, Dec. 6, 1926, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 53/566.

The zealots then collected the signatures of over 200 Tory backbenchers on a memorial demanding the suspension of relations until Soviet propaganda ceased. Meeting with the Prime Minister on December 14, spokesmen for the petitioners described the intense feelings within the party. Baldwin offered a few sympathetic remarks but asked them to respect the watchful waiting policy.[66] The next evening Locker-Lampson expressed pleasure with the progress of the anti-Red campaign.[67] Indeed, more than half of the Tory M.P.'s had signed the petition, and many local Conservative associations sent similar resolutions to the Foreign Office.[68]

In addition to the Chinese development, tension within the Tory party probably contributed to the zealots' success. Many Tories believed the government should have taken strong measures against trade union extremists after the general strike, while Baldwin remained conciliatory. In the fall of 1926 he was pressured to curb trade union power but adamantly refused.[69] Party Treasurer Lord Younger feared

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[66] Daily Mail, Dec. 11, 1926, p. 9; The Times, Dec. 15, 1926, p. 16.

[67] Daily Mail, Dec. 16, 1926, p. 9.

[68] For these resolutions, see FO 371/11787. Even Baldwin's wife apparently supported the zealots: in the course of one speech, she said, "Our work is to keep out the Bolsheviks"; see George Bilainkin, Maisky: Ten Years Ambassador (London, 1944), p. 60.

[69] Kermit McKenzie, Comintern and World Revolution, 1928-1943 (New York, 1964), pp. 125-28.

another die-hard group again might threaten to split the party.[70] For at least some Conservatives the government's permissiveness was epitomized by their unwillingness to sever relations with Russia.

The government watched the anti-Soviet movement with increasing apprehension. While Chamberlain was in Geneva in early December, Under-Secretary Godfrey Locker-Lampson, deeply concerned with the Tory memorial, wrote that the zealots could not be contained much longer.[71] However, the Assistant Secretary, J. D. Gregory, defended Chamberlain's "temporizing makeshift policy which will just, if possible, keep them [the Soviets] within bounds."[72] Predicting instead that Soviet propaganda would intensify, Permanent Under-Secretary Sir William Tyrrell believed that a flagrant violation of the Trade Agreement would allow Britain to dismiss the Soviets with "almost universal consent." Two days later his memorandum was approved by Baldwin.[73]

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[70] Younger to J. C. C. Davidson, Dec. 27, 1926, cited by Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 447.

[71] Godfrey Locker-Lampson to Tyrrell, Dec. 8, 1926, FO 371/11787. G. Locker-Lampson claimed that the promoters of the memorial presented it at that time because of Chamberlain's absence.

[72] Memorandum by Gregory, Dec. 3, 1926, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 559-60.

[73] Memorandum by Tyrrell, Dec. 4, 1926, Ibid., pp. 563-64; minute by Tyrrell, Dec. 6, 1926, Ibid., p. 564.

At Godfrey Locker-Lampson's request, Gregory outlined diplomatic arguments for and against a break. Although cancellation might damage Soviet prestige, it would increase uneasiness on the Continent, damage trade, cut off sources of information in Moscow, and forfeit personal contacts with the Bolsheviks. Such a "leap in the dark" would satisfy many Tories, but it hardly would be "useful diplomacy." However, a "peculiarly outrageous" action would necessitate a break.[74] Gregory's memorandum was distributed when the Cabinet discussed Russia on December 15. What transpired is unclear, but they agreed to continue deliberations after the holiday recess.[75]

The deepening Chinese crisis rapidly forced relations to the breaking point. After the Nationalists took Hankow in January, 1927, Chinese mobs overwhelmed the British concession. Kuomintang armies marched next on Shanghai where the international settlement was defended by three British army brigades. The soldiers fired on Chinese rioters, but this only intensified their fury. British citizens and investments were seriously endangered.[76]

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[74] Memorandum by Gregory, Dec. 10, 1926, FO 371/11787.

[75] Cabinet minutes, Dec. 15, 1926, CAB 23/53.

[76] Robert T. Pollard, China's Foreign Relations, 1917-1931 (New York, 1933), pp. 297-99; Chapman, The Chinese Revolution, pp. 32-35; North and Eudin, M. N. Roy's Mission to China, p. 46.

Soviet leaders exhorted the Kuomintang to crush English imperialism. When questioned about such statements, Maxim Litvinov answered that his government desired a liberated China, but he denied official involvement with either the Kuomintang or the anti-British campaign.[77]

Conservative papers, however, charged that Soviet agents directed the Nationalists; and most feared a sovietized China.[78] But a few moderate journals portrayed the Nationalists as staunch anti-Communists who were using the Soviets; the Spectator predicted the Kuomintang soon would dismiss them.[79] Even the Observer agreed that Russia had seriously violated the Trade Agreement. Since 1919 Garvin believed that her propaganda would subside once she was admitted to the world community. But the increasing threat to British life and property led him to conclude that Russia had embarked on an "unproclaimed war" against Britain. He now perceived that Soviet activities during the general strike had been the opening round.[80]

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[77]Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, p. 364; The Times, Feb. 5, 1927, p. 11.

[78]Morning Post, Feb. 3, 1927, p. 8; National Review, LXXXVIII (January, 1927), 659-61; Daily Mail, Jan. 29, 1927, p. 8; The Times, Jan. 4, 1927, p. 11.

[79]Spectator, CXXXVIII (Feb. 5, 1927), 176, (March 5, 1927), 345; Time and Tide, VII (Dec. 10, 1926), 1130, Daily Telegraph, Feb. 7, 1927, p. 8.

[80]Observer, Jan. 30, 1927, p. 14. See also Garvin to Chamberlain, Jan. 31, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 38/3/9.

Unable to determine who was using whom in China, Austen Chamberlain criticized those of his colleagues who insisted that the Bolsheviks were dominant.[81] Joynson-Hicks, for example, wrote, "I believe that the Chinese leaders are Bolshie in heart and that unless we are very careful we may find the Bolshie Cantonese [Kuomintang] in command of the whole of China."[82] Other Tory ministers and backbenchers also denounced Russia.[83]

The Protest Note

At this time Chamberlain requested a draft protest based solely on Soviet statements and writings.[84] The draft was prepared by Gregory and amended by Chamberlain before it was distributed among Cabinet ministers on January 19. It included fourteen alleged violations of the Trade Agreement

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[81] Chamberlain to Tyrrell, Dec. 9, 1926, Ibid., AC 53/569. See also Tyrrell to Chamberlain, Dec. 6, 1926, Ibid., AC 53/566.

[82] Joynson-Hicks to Chamberlain, Jan. 7, 1927, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Files, Personal Papers, FO 800/260. (Personal Papers hereinafter referred to as FO 800/ .) For Birkenhead's similar statement, see The Times, Dec. 11, 1926, p. 14.

[83] For speeches by Attorney General Sir Douglas Hogg and Churchill, see The Times, Jan. 8, p. 7, Jan. 21, 1927, p. 14. For speeches by Kingsley Wood and Oliver Locker-Lampson, see The Times, Jan. 19, 1927, p. 16, and Observer, Jan. 20, 1927, p. 19.

[84] Cabinet minutes, Jan. 17, 1927, CAB 23/54.

since May, 1926: editorials from Izvestia and documents from the Comintern on the general strike; speeches about China; an Izvestia allegation of a British plot to murder the Shah of Persia; speeches by Chicherin and others on English imperialism; and a "mendacious" Izvestia cartoon depicting a caricature of Chamberlain applauding the execution of Lithuanian Communists. The note concluded that if such violations ceased, the Soviets would be taking a first step toward improving relations.[85] Chamberlain concentrated on public statements for good reasons; in September, 1921 and in May, 1923 Russia had disputed Curzon's claims of clandestine activities.

The Foreign Secretary authorized the draft without consulting the Cabinet. Developments in China undoubtedly helped move him, but as he explained to Balfour, a protest also might "give satisfaction to the more restless of our followers."[86] Chamberlain wanted the Cabinet to decide if the note would impress upon world opinion the gravity of Britain's complaints.[87] He still firmly opposed a diplomatic break. On January 24 he distributed to the Cabinet

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[85]The typed draft with Chamberlain's amendations and the final copy as printed for the Cabinet can be found in FO 371/12589.

[86]Chamberlain to Balfour, Jan. 22, 1927, Balfour Papers, Add. MSS, 49736.

[87]Ibid., Chamberlain to Steel-Maitland (Minister of Labour), Jan. 26, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/37.

Gregory's memorandum of December 9 and one of his own. In it he explained that a break might prompt Marshal Pilsudski to attack the Soviet Union and probably would throw one or two of the Baltic States into Russia's arms. Turkey might become alarmed enough to abandon her recent Western orientation. A break would stimulate anti-British activities in Persia. Most important, German Chancellor Gustav Stresemann's policy of reconciliation with the West would be "gravely embarrassed." German Nationalists would be encouraged to seek Soviet aid in challenging the Versailles settlement in eastern Europe. Unlike Gregory, Chamberlain also spelled out the adverse domestic ramifications: Soviet propaganda and funds would continue to reach Britain, trade would suffer, and Liberals and Labourites would unite. Finally, "its ultimate consequences might be disastrous . . . on the industrial position and life of the nation." As he explained, Labour and trade union extremists had been eclipsed after the general strike, but a break would force moderates to reunite with them and might lead to a renewal of their domination.[88]

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[88]Memorandum by Chamberlain, Jan. 24, 1927, CAB 24/184. For a more detailed explanation of the ramifications on trade, see Chamberlain to Cunliffe-Lister (President of the Board of Trade), Jan. 19, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/145. For a brief review of relations between Russia and the Baltic States and Poland at that time, see Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, pp. 346-47.

Before the Cabinet discussion of Russia resumed in mid-February, anti-Soviet agitation had intensified greatly. The Daily Mail repeatedly asked Tories how long they would tolerate their leaders' neglect of principles. It charged that Britain's prestige on the Continent was plummeting because of her inability to deal with Soviet provocations. And a break would strengthen Soviet "moderates" by showing that foreign intrigue was self-defeating.[89] Even the Observer stated that if the "undeclared" war in China did not stop, the Soviets should be sent packing.[90] Protests from Tory-dominated organizations poured into the Foreign Office.[91]

When parliament reconvened in February, several Tory backbenchers who never had spoken on Russia urged a break.[92] On February 18 a debate on a private Member's bill to prohibit foreign contributions for strikers centered on Russia. Ironically the Home Secretary spoke against the

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[89] Daily Mail, Jan.29-Feb. 17, 1927. For similar editorials, see Morning Post, Feb. 3, 1927, p. 8, and National Review, LXXXVIII (February, 1927), 801-4.

[90] Observer, Feb. 6, p. 16, Feb. 13, p. 14, Feb. 20, 1927, p. 14. However, the English Review, XLIV (January, 1927), 16-17, and the Saturday Review, CXLI (Dec. 18, 1926), 754, urged the government to stay their hand.

[91] The Times, Feb. 4, p. 11, Feb. 18, 1927, p. 11.

[92] For the speeches of F. G. Penny, H. O'Neill, and Herbert Cayzer, see Debates, CCII (Feb. 8, 1927), cols. 59-62, 183-86, 238-41.

bill because Baldwin felt it was unnecessarily repressive, but he betrayed sympathy for the sponsors. Few Conservative speakers agreed with the government. The vote was a good measure of their sentiments on Russia. Most Tory backbenchers abstained, 77 supported the bill, and only 10 joined the government in opposition. With Liberal and Labour support it was denied a third reading by a plurality of 100 votes.[93]

Four moderate backbenchers wrote an open letter which reflected the changing mood of grass-roots sentiment. They explained that previously a rupture would have been foolhardy, but now the Soviets had moved from verbal hostility to action in China. After sampling their constituents' opinions, they concluded that a break would be "almost unanimously supported."[94]

The leaders of the "Clear out the Reds Campaign" were outraged. According to Alfred Knox, "The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, by his obstinately ostrich-like policy in this matter, has become a danger to his party and, what is of greater moment, a danger to the vital interests of the country."[95] Oliver Locker-Lampson cried, "It is not possible to exaggerate the depth of disgust in British

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[93] For the entire proceedings, see Ibid., CCII (Feb. 18, 1927), cols. 1275-1362.

[94] The Times, Feb. 23, 1927, p. 8.

[95] Ibid., Feb. 17, 1927, p. 10.

hearts over this long drawn-out vacillation."[96] In separate speeches on February 4, Leopold Amery, Churchill, and Joynson-Hicks denounced Soviet activities in China.[97] A week later Churchill exclaimed that a break "would give an immense amount of satisfaction from one end of the land to the other."[98]

The Soviets were deeply alarmed, Izvestia pointing to the Observer's editorial change as proof of a powerful anti-Soviet plot. Litvinov said that this "threat to peace" was intended to mask Britain's serious domestic and foreign problems.[99] From Moscow Hodgson wrote that although the Soviets previously had conjured up bogus war scares for political reasons, he now believed they genuinely feared war. Since Britain was the greatest bourgeois power, they assumed she was "co-ordinating and directing" the "imperialists" for an all-out attack.[100]

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[96] Daily Mail, Feb. 19, 1927, p. 9. For similar statements, see Bilainkin, Maisky, pp. 61-62.

[97] The Times, Feb. 5, p. 12, Feb. 7, 1927, p. 16. See also a speech by William Bridgeman (First Lord of the Admiralty) in Daily Mail, Feb. 7, 1927, p. 8.

[98] The Times, Feb. 17, 1927, p. 10.

[99] Observer, Feb. 6, 1927, p. 20; for Litvinov's statement to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet, see Soviet Documents, II, 156-58.

[100] Hodgson to Chamberlain, Jan. 28, 1927, British Documents, ser. 1a, II, 776-78. For a typical Soviet accusation of a British-inspired military threat, see The Times, Jan. 20, 1927, p. 11.

Against this backdrop each Cabinet minister considered the feasibility of sending Chamberlain's protest. Their notations provide the fullest account of the Cabinet's differing views on Russian policy during Baldwin's second government. Birkenhead and Churchill, both "rightists," thought the conclusion was too feeble in light of the evidence preceding it. Birkenhead wanted to end the note with a declaration that relations would be broken unless the anti-British campaign at home and abroad ceased "forthwith." Churchill believed the loss of British life in China should be the primary reason.[101]

Their comments were circulated to other ministers. Balfour, Steel-Maitland, and Cecil, all "centrists," wanted a protest, but they agreed that Birkenhead's conclusion would, in Cecil's words, "shoot the bolt." Steel-Maitland feared a situation "worse than at present" if the government sent the note without first being prepared to break. None of these ministers desired a break. Balfour believed it would increase international tensions. Steel-Maitland suggested that the note should end with a "stern negative to any suggestion of closer relations." Cecil simply wanted to warn Russia that public opinion could not be restrained much

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[101] Minute by Birkenhead on the Foreign Office draft note, Jan. 26, 1927, CAB 24/184; memorandum by Churchill, Feb. 16, 1927, CAB 24/185.

longer.[102] Cunliffe-Lister cautioned that if a rupture occurred, the Soviets probably would stop purchasing in Britain and default on their contracts, thereby "very seriously" damaging the economy.[103] The Prime Minister did not want to disturb international affairs or unite Labour moderates and extremists.[104] Godfrey Locker-Lampson suggested rescinding the Trade Agreement: if the Soviets then broke relations, the onus would rest with them.[105]

Foreign Office civil servants firmly opposed a protest. J. D. Gregory reasoned that even a "mild bomb-shell" could increase the power of German Nationalists and would fuel Pilsudski's "growing truculence." Sir William Tyrrell concurred.[106] Robert Hodgson argued that Moscow

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[102]Balfour to Chamberlain, Jan. 26, 1927, Balfour Papers, Add. MSS, 49736; memorandum by Steel-Maitland, Feb. 8, 1927, CAB 24/184; Cecil to Chamberlain, Feb. 17, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/97.

[103]Memorandum by Cunliffe-Lister, Jan. 28, 1927, CAB 24/184. He appended a detailed, twenty-seven page analysis of Anglo-Soviet trade.

[104]Chamberlain to Balfour, Jan. 22, 1927, FO 800/260.

[105]Godfrey Locker-Lampson to Tyrrell, Feb. 15, 1927, FO 800/227.

[106]Minute by Gregory, Jan. 24, 1927, and minute by Tyrrell, Jan. 25, 1927, both attached to a memorandum by Chamberlain, Jan. 24, 1927, FO 371/12589. Labourites often charged that Foreign Office civil servants sought to sever relations with Russia many times during the decade; e.g., Lyman, The First Labour Government, pp. 260-61. Although Gregory and the others were staunch anti-Bolsheviks, the numerous Foreign Office memoranda during these months demonstrate their extreme caution.

would interpret a protest either as a confession of weakness or as a prelude to a rupture. A controversy over the note's contents would negate the original intent. Moreover, it would reinforce their belief in British hostility but would not change their policy. Hodgson suggested that Chamberlain merely should tell the Soviets that they should not be surprised at international revulsion against their propaganda offensive.[107] Other British diplomats reported that a break would be viewed unfavorably on the Continent. The dispatch of Sir Ronald Lindsay, the ambassador in Berlin, was especially incisive. He wanted the government to realize that they were engaged in "a new kind of war," an ideological conflict fought with words. By forcing a break Britain might convert "the present peculiar struggle into an armed conflict of the old fashioned sort." Instead of risking this, the government should retaliate with an economic boycott, counterpropaganda, and diplomatic pressure on neutral nations.[108] In sum, the arguments against a break seemed to outweigh the advantages.

On February 16 and 17 the Cabinet considered the

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[107]Hodgson to Chamberlain, Feb. 4, 1927, FO 371/12589.

[108]Lindsay to Gregory, Feb. 3, 1927, Sir Robert Graham (ambassador to Italy) to Gregory, Feb. 4, 1927, Sir George Clerk (minister to Turkey) to Gregory, Feb. 2, 1927, Eric Phipps (minister to France) to Gregory, Jan. 26, 1927, Ibid.

effects of a break on international and domestic affairs. According to Birkenhead the discussion was long and acrimonious, but he believed the opponents of a break would prevail by a "narrow majority."[109] After another "considerable discussion" on February 18, the Cabinet "generally" decided to continue relations because of European "unrest" and the absence of anything like the Zinoviev letter to justify a sudden rupture. But if propaganda continued, public indignation would make a break "within a few months . . . almost inevitable." Finally, they decided to toughen the conclusion of the draft protest.[110] Neville Chamberlain suggested, "A continuance of such acts as are here complained of must sooner or later render inevitable the severance of ordinary relations." At the request of Lord Eustace Percy, the note also stated that the Trade Agreement would be abrogated.[111] On February 23 the Cabinet ordered

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[109] Cabinet minutes, Feb. 16, Feb. 17, 1927, CAB 23/54; Birkenhead to Irwin, Feb. 17, 1927, cited by Birkenhead, F. E., p. 537. Before the second meeting Chamberlain met with at least one backbench Tory leader to explain his opposition to a break: Sir Warden Chilcott then briefed a meeting of M.P.'s from Liverpool and the North Country on February 16 and reported to the Foreign Secretary that they supported his reasoning "at this moment"; see Chilcott to Chamberlain, Feb. 17, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/98. If Chamberlain also talked to others and found similar support, he might have mentioned it at the following Cabinet meeting to bolster his case.

[110] Cabinet minutes, Feb. 18, 1927, CAB 23/54.

[111] Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain, p. 154;

the revised protest sent immediately to the Soviet charge.[112]

A few newspapers backed the note unequivocally. The Daily Telegraph called it a clear exposition. The Times praised the documentation of Soviet aims but wondered if they would comply. The Western Mail was doubtful because their leaders "know nothing of decency and fair play." J. L. Garvin agreed that if their "mad dog" tactics continued, Britain had no choice but to sever relations and organize counterpropaganda.[113] Some "conciliatory" journals, however, questioned the government's wisdom. The Spectator and the Saturday Review feared greater unrest on the Continent. The Daily Express and Time and Tide claimed that it pushed the two countries toward the break they both firmly opposed; they added that the Soviets also could complain of intemperate remarks by certain Conservatives.[114]

Percy to Austen Chamberlain, Feb. 21, 1927, Chamberlain to Percy, Feb. 22, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/415, AC 54/417.

[112]Cabinet minutes, Feb. 23, 1927, CAB 23/54. For the note, see Chamberlain to Rosengolz, Feb. 23, 1927, Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 1, 1927), Cmnd. 2822, "Note from His Majesty's Government to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Respecting the Relations Existing between the Two Governments and Note in Reply," (London, 1927), pp. 2-20.

[113]Daily Telegraph, Feb. 24, 1927, p. 10; The Times, Feb. 24, 1927, p. 15; Western Mail, Feb. 25, 1927, p. 6; Observer, Feb. 27, 1927, p. 16.

[114]Spectator, CXXXVIII (Feb. 26, 1927), 309; Saturday

The Daily Mail attacked the note for the opposite reason:

> As a display of feebleness and 'funk,' Sir Austen Chamberlain's longheralded note of protest to the Soviet representative in London will make the blood of every self-respecting Briton tingle in his veins. . . . We have heard a more formidable scolding given by an elderly lady to her Pekinese in Hyde Park.[115]

In a rare disagreement with the Daily Mail, the Morning Post welcomed the note, hoping the government henceforth would work for "European unanimity" on the Russian problem. It concluded, "If the Soviet means war on Christendom it is for Christendom as a whole to buckle its armour."[116]

Tory zealots were not pleased. Guy Kindersley believed the note differed little from its unsuccessful predecessors. Alfred Knox wanted a "little more of the Cromwell touch." For Oliver Locker-Lampson it was "a proclamation to the world that we will take almost any humiliation lying down."[117] Even Tories defending it used strong language against the Soviets.[118] Lord Birkenhead

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Review, CXLIII (Feb. 26, 1927), 291; Daily Express, Feb. 25, 1927, cited by Bilainkin, Maisky, p. 63; Time and Tide, VIII (March 4, 1927), 201.

[115] Daily Mail, Feb. 24, p. 8, Feb. 25, 1927, p. 8. See also National Review, LXXXIX (March, 1927), 30-32.

[116] Morning Post, Feb. 24, 1927, p. 10.

[117] Daily Mail, Feb. 25, 1927, p. 9.

[118] For speeches by Leopold Amery, Robert Horne, and Kingsley Wood, see The Times, Feb. 26, p. 10, March 1, 1927, p. 8, and Bilainkin, Maisky, p. 64.

was relieved, for the problem soon would be solved "one way or the other."[119]

Izvestia called the note a farce, and the Soviets organized mass demonstrations in protest. The interim British chargé in Moscow, William Peters, reported that "great nervousness is being displayed in Soviet circles."[120] In the official reply Litvinov contended that Britain wanted to squelch free speech. He cited a number of anti-Soviet statements by Tory newspapers, ministers, and backbenchers to demonstrate that Britain "deliberately departs from generally accepted international standards and customs and even elementary decencies." Instead of issuing self-defeating ultimatums, Chamberlain should concentrate on improving relations for their mutual benefit.[121]

Chamberlain told Churchill that he was especially concerned with the zealots' response. Along with the Daily Mail, they confronted him with a "formidable combination." But, he continued, "I am a foreign minister. I have to think of the consequences and to look far beyond the limits

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[119] Birkenhead to Irwin, Feb. 24, 1927, cited by Birkenhead, F. E., p. 537.

[120] The Times, March 1, p. 14, Feb. 26, 1927, p. 19; Peters to Chamberlain, March 11, 1927, British Documents, ser. 1a, III, (London, 1970), pp. 86-88.

[121] Litvinov to Peters, Feb. 26, 1927, Soviet Documents, II, 159-63.

of their horizon." Since the zealots did not understand the complexities of foreign policy, he anticipated their hostile reception of the note.[122]

Likewise, Chamberlain was not surprised by the response of others. British diplomats reported great excitement in Europe. If a break did come, Chamberlain believed that the Continent now would absorb the shock more easily than if it had come unexpectedly. The Soviet reply was, as usual, "offensive and impertinent," but the Foreign Secretary still hoped they would be sobered by the warning.[123]

On March 3 Commons discussed Russia. The Opposition charged the government with equal responsibility for the current troubles. According to MacDonald, "Take our Chancellor of the Exchequer, put a beard on him, make him talk Russian instead of English, and behold, you have Zinovieff."[124] Lloyd George agreed, adding that other European statesmen never abused the Soviets in public.[125]

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[122]Chamberlain to Churchill, Feb. 22, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 35/1/19.

[123]Chamberlain to Lindsay, March 1, 1927, Ibid., AC 54/335. See also Chamberlain to Crewe (ambassador to France), Feb. 24, 1927, British Documents, ser. 1a, III, 49.

[124]For his entire speech, see Debates, CCIII (March 3, 1927), cols. 616-26.

[125]Ibid., cols. 635-43.

But the apparent conversion of two prominent Tory backbenchers to the zealots' viewpoint indicated waning confidence in the government. Robert Horne confessed that his long-standing belief about the Soviets was wrong; they really were more interested in fostering revolution than trade. There was no difference between the Third International and the Soviet government: "The Russian Government has just done in this matter what so many crooks have done in business in this country, when they incorporate a company to do their dirty work for them." Soviet activities in China convinced Horne they were oblivious to protest notes. In his view a break would reinvigorate Britain's authority and aid European peace and reconstruction.[126]

The second backbench convert to the hard line was Robert Boothby, parliamentary private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and previously a staunch "conciliator." A member of the Tory delegation which had visited Russia in April, 1926, his policy suggestions had been similar to those of the Opposition.[127] After reviewing his previous stand, Boothby alleged that Soviet activities during the general strike and in China demonstrated their desire to destroy the British Empire: "It may be the great battle of the twentieth century and . . . we shall have to

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[126] Ibid., cols. 608-17.

[127] See Appendix II for the trip.

resist it by every means in our power." In the event of another outrage, public pressure would force a rupture. Even the termination of the Trade Agreement would not hurt Britain, "I do not think we should lose much, because we have not much." Surprised by Boothby's about-face, Labourite Philip Snowden attributed it to Churchill's "mesmeric influence" and suggested that if Boothby "continues to crawl along the hedge bottoms he will be an Under-Secretary before very long."[128]

At the end of the debate Austen Chamberlain emphasized the futility of negotiating a new accord when Russia continued to violate the Trade Agreement. The government did not sever relations only because it would react against British interests in troubled eastern Europe. His protest note allowed the Continent to adjust to a possible breach and offered the Soviets one more chance to reform.[129] Labourites forced a division, but no Tories voted with them; the zealots probably were satisfied that the protest was in effect an ultimatum.

Most Tory papers, including the Daily Mail, were pleased with Chamberlain's intimation that the Soviets had

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[128] Debates, CCIII (March 3, 1927), cols. 656-64. See also Oliver Locker-Lampson's typical outburst, cols. 643-50.

[129] Ibid., cols. 626-34.

received a final warning.[130] But the Spectator urged the government not to be stampeded into a move they might regret. The Saturday Review asserted that Chamberlain was pressured into writing the note "against the dictates of his own common sense."

> It is time that some of his colleagues in the Cabinet--those M. Litvinoff mentions in his Note, for example--realized that they are menacing European stability, lowering British prestige and preventing the rapid recovery of British industry by speeches which win easy applause from ill-educated audiences, but which show a lamentable lack of that deeper patriotism which demands steady and unsensational efforts to bring prosperity and peace to Great Britain.[131]

The appeal went unheeded. Joynson-Hicks and Birkenhead continued to denounce the Soviets.[132] Other Cabinet colleagues joined them.[133] Horne, Alfred Mond, Auckland Geddes, and other prominent Tories soon demanded the expulsion of the Soviets.[134]

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[130] Daily Mail, March 4, 1927, p. 10; Observer, March 6, 1927, p. 16; The Times, March 4, 1927, p. 15.

[131] Spectator, CXXXVIII (March 5, 1927), 353; Saturday Review, CXLIII (March 5, 1927), 341-42.

[132] For a speech by Joynson-Hicks, see The Times, March 8, 1927, p. 18. Birkenhead's speeches can be found in The Times, March 8, p. 18, March 17, p. 16, May 7, 1927, p. 7.

[133] E.g., speeches by Hoare and Hogg in Ibid., March 10, p. 8, March 12, 1927, p. 7.

[134] Ibid., March 26, p. 7, April 8, p. 9, April 11, 1927, p. 9.

These attacks continued even after Chiang Kai-shek purged Soviet advisors and sympathizers from the Nationalist movement in April.[135] The leaders of the "Clear out the Reds Campaign" secured the prohibition of the Red flag from the Stratford-on-Avon ceremonies marking Shakespeare's birth date.[136] A month later they teamed with the Daily Mail to boycott Russian Oil Products, Limited, a Soviet marketing agency in Britain which they claimed sold oil stolen from prewar British concessions. They were especially piqued by its advertisement in the London telephone directory. On May 3 the Post Office agreed to prohibit it in the future.[137]

Soviet anxieties peaked. Rykov, the premier, claimed the British note was the signal for another Western invasion of Russia. As proof he cited a recent Italian protocol which recognized Rumania's occupation of Bessarabia, taken from Russia in 1918. He accused Tory politicians and newspapers of working to annihilate or isolate Russia.[138]

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[135] For the details, see North and Eudin, M. N. Roy's Mission to China, passim.

[136] Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 238-42.

[137] Ibid., p. 266; Bilainkin, Maisky, p. 65.

[138] Eudin and Fisher, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, pp. 371-74. This theme was repeated constantly; see an article from Pravda and the May Day manifesto issued by the Comintern in The Times, March 8, p. 16, May 2, 1927, p. 14.

The allegation was not entirely unfounded. On March 3 the Morning Post stated:

> What would be of service, if it could be attained, would be a European understanding directed to the end of disinfecting the world from Bolshevism, and, in particular, confining it to its chief plague-spot in Russia. If the Government were to induce the rest of Europe to combine with them in such a policy, then we might really get to the business. . . . It would be a great crusade; a thing worth doing, and it would have a beneficial result of bringing Europe together for the common safety.[139]

Oliver Locker-Lampson had expressed a similar thought during his parliamentary speech on March 3;

> If you want peace you must fight for it. . . . Do we mean a peace which entitles every outcast of the underworld to wipe his boots upon the Union Jack? This is not the sort of peace we want. The olive branch may be an admirable weapon for communities which are civilized, but for the anthropoid apes of the Bolshevik jungle give me the big stick, yes, and the bigger boot.[140]

But aside from these isolated examples, Tories did not demand military action. Some zealots and newspapers explicitly rejected the idea.[141] On March 8 Austen Chamberlain added, "We have never tried to do it and never shall."[142] He was especially upset with those Tories whose remarks

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[139] Morning Post, March 3, 1927, p. 10.

[140] Debates, CCIII (March 3, 1927), col. 650.

[141] E.g., a letter from Sir William Davison in The Times, March 1, 1927, p. 10; Spectator, CXXXVIII (March 12, 1927), 409; and The Times, March 16, 1927, p. 16.

[142] Spectator, CXXXVIII (March 12, 1927), 409.

reinforced Soviet fears. In late February he was informed that Henry Page Croft had told a group of German Nationalists that European Conservatives should unite to resist Bolshevism. Page Croft, whom Chamberlain described as "a good fellow, but a politician of the Morning Post type--more zeal and patriotism than judgement," received a stern lecture.[143] On May 8 the Foreign Secretary confessed failure in private, "Nothing that I or others say . . . appears in any way to loosen the obsession which has taken hold . . . of the Soviet Government."[144]

In his public speeches during the spring, Chamberlain stressed that the decision to maintain relations would be vindicated.[145] But on April 27 he wrote that Soviet

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[143]Lindsay to Chamberlain, Feb. 26, 1927, Chamberlain to Lindsay, March 1, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/334, AC 54/335.

[144]Chamberlain to Sir George Grahame (ambassador to Belgium), May 8, 1927, Ibid., AC 54/233. Chamberlain apparently disregarded Hodgson's advice on how to answer the Soviet allegations. Instead of merely denying them, the British chargé suggested that the Foreign Secretary should state in positive terms that his attempts to improve relations had been negated by the Soviets' persistent obstinacy. Their tactics alone led to the creation of a "community of interest in the countries threatened or assailed." Hodgson took this stand because "I feel strongly the necessity of showing up the Soviet Government and its Party, not as being a peril to European civilisation, but as being a damned nuisance to everybody and admissible to relations of normal international comity only when it abandons its meddling propensities"; see Hodgson to Gregory, March 2, 1927. The letter probably was circulated within the government because a copy is in the Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, pp. 234-37.

[145]The Times, April 8, 1927, p. 9.

propaganda had not subsided. Although still fearing the consequences of a break, he admitted: "It may at any moment become impossible any longer to maintain the semblance of diplomatic relations."[146]

Chamberlain's remark verified the success of the Tory zealots. The turmoil in China, coming so soon after the general strike, led a number of "centrists" and some "conciliators" to change their views on Russia. The strong reactions of J. L. Garvin and Robert Boothby to the events in China are telling indicators of a fundamental shift of Tory sentiments. Chamberlain's ultimatum is another. As usual, neither the Prime Minister nor Chamberlain apparently tried to stop the anti-Soviet speeches of certain Cabinet ministers. Of all Tory leaders, only Lord Irwin in India voiced his concern over this shift.[147] Under the zealots' heavy fire, Chamberlain's grasp on Russian policy seemed to be weakening rapidly.

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[146]Chamberlain to Sir Francis Lindley (minister to Norway), April 27, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/331. See also Chamberlain to Esmé Howard (ambassador to the United States), April 25, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/264.

[147]Irwin to Cecil, April 6, 1927, Cecil Papers, Add. MSS, 51084. This letter also contained a number of objections to a rupture. Alluding to its effects, he stated: "If you stand sufficiently far away from a single horse he can give you a very effective kick; but if you are among a dozen horses in a railway-truck, they cannot hurt you."

CHAPTER X

THE BREAK

The Arcos Raid

On May 12, 1927 150 London police invaded Soviet House, the headquarters of the Russian Trade Delegation and Arcos, a Soviet trading company incorporated under British laws.[1] Each floor was searched methodically. Police used pneumatic drills to open reinforced doors and safes, carting away truckloads of documents during the five-day search. Scotland Yard and the government at first remained silent. On May 16 Joynson-Hicks revealed that an "official document" was or had been in the hands of an Arcos employee. He claimed to have obtained a search warrant after consulting with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Although the paper had not been found yet, the authorities still were examining the confiscated materials.[2]

Soviet chargé Rosengolz denounced the raid as a flagrant violation of the Trade Agreement, which granted diplomatic immunity and exempted sealed courier bags from search. He also complained that the search warrant had not been presented immediately and that police had frisked

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[1]For a vivid description of the raid, see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 267-69.

[2]Debates, CCVI (May 16, 1927), cols. 911, 915, 916.

female employees.[3] On May 17 Litvinov charged that this "reckless" action had been inspired by the "hate" Russia campaign, "which was meeting with growing encouragement from members of the British Government."[4] British papers reported great protest demonstrations in the Soviet Union.[5]

Even before the details of the raid were known, a few extremist Conservative journals applauded and asked for a diplomatic break.[6] The Daily Telegraph, the Western Mail, and the Observer were less enthusiastic. Almost alone, the Saturday Review protested: "If we do not ourselves strictly observe the terms of our Agreement with Russia, we hopelessly weaken our case when we protest against her violations of it."[7]

Some of the confiscated documents implicated the Trade Delegation in espionage. On May 18 Joynson-Hicks circulated the evidence to his colleagues. The next day the Cabinet appointed a committee to formulate a statement; the members included Cave, Birkenhead, Cecil, Joynson-Hicks,

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[3] The Times, May 14, 1917, p. 12.

[4] Litvinov to Peters, May 17, 1927, Soviet Documents, II, 375-77.

[5] The Times, May 14, 1927, p. 14.

[6] Morning Post, May 14, 1927, p. 10; Daily Mail, May 13, 1927, p. 10.

[7] Daily Telegraph, May 23, 1927, p. 12; Western Mail, May 17, 1927, p. 6; Observer, May 22, 1927, p. 16; Saturday Review, CXLIII (May 21, 1927), 773.

Austen Chamberlain, Worthington-Evans, and Hogg.[8] At their first meeting Chamberlain charged that the Home Secretary's draft was "so weak in form as to amount practically to a confession of failure." The Foreign Secretary proposed a "justification indeed so complete . . . that it must almost certainly involve the dismissal of the Soviet mission." Ironically the Home Secretary protested that Chamberlain's draft was "spattered over with 'Daily Mail'adjectives which made it read like one of Quex's Spy novels." When discussion resumed on May 20 the committee appointed Lord Cave to draw up a compromise statement which was accepted that afternoon. Cave did not mention a severance of relations.[9]

Several Cabinet ministers opposed a break. Balfour wanted to ask the Soviets for suggestions on replacing traditional diplomacy, which had devolved into a "sinister combination of legitimate trade with illegitimate propaganda." Lord Eustace Percy reasoned that although the raid proved the misconduct of the Trade Delegation, it did "not necessarily" indicate hostile Soviet policy. The usual practice in such cases, he noted, was to expel the guilty but not to sever

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[8] Cabinet minutes, May 19, 1927, CAB 23/55.

[9] Chamberlain to Baldwin, May 19, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 38/3/2; Joynson-Hicks to Baldwin, May 20, 1927, Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, p. 238. The committee did not keep minutes, and the drafts by Joynson-Hicks and Chamberlain apparently have been lost.

relations, because this always was interpreted as "an introduction to a state of war." He conceded that a "complete breach may, and probably must, follow, but if it does follow it will come from Moscow and not from us." Viscount Cecil later questioned the evidence from the raid, adding that he would not have touched Arcos for economic reasons.[10]

On May 23 the Cabinet accepted Cave's draft and by "general agreement" approved the cancellation of the Trade Agreement and the termination of diplomatic relations. Chamberlain acquiesced after the Cabinet agreed to publish the incriminating evidence.[11] That afternoon he added the decision to the draft and asked Baldwin to make the announcement the next day.[12]

Addressing a packed House the Prime Minister stated that the authorities had been investigating a group of secret agents who were trying to obtain classified military documents for Russia. Early in the year a civilian employee of the military was convicted of passing secret papers to the Soviet Trade Delegation which sent them to Russia.

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[10]Balfour to Chamberlain, May 20, 1927, Balfour Papers, Add. MSS, 49736; Percy to Chamberlain, May 19, 1927, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 54/418; Viscount Cecil, A Great Experiment: an Autobiography (New York, 1941), p. 183.

[11]Cabinet minutes, May 23, 1927, CAB 23/55.

[12]Chamberlain to Baldwin, May 23, 1927, Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, pp. 239-40.

Recently, he continued, an "official and highly confidential" paper was discovered missing and "documentary evidence" proved it had been given to the Trade Delegation. Although it was not recovered in the raid, other seized materials revealed that both Arcos and the Trade Delegation were engaged in military espionage and subversive activities "throughout the British Empire and North and South America." As proof he cited a Soviet dispatch showing that a Trade Delegation member had been assigned to Britain specifically for espionage. Numerous letters to "well-known Communist individuals and organizations" in Britain and overseas contained directives from the Profintern. One document described how to subvert the crews of British ships, and another included a list of secret cover addresses of Communist parties in America and the Empire. The government also secured from other unspecified sources a Foreign Commissariat dispatch demonstrating that Michael Borodin received his orders from Moscow, and a telegram from Rosengolz discussing the domestic distribution of anti-British statements by Chinese Nationalists. The Prime Minister concluded:

> Diplomatic relations when thus deliberately and systematically abused are themselves a danger to peace and His Majesty's Government have therefore decided that unless the House expresses its disapproval on Thursday, they will terminate the Trade Agreement, require the withdrawal of the Trade Delegation and Soviet Mission from London

> and recall the British Mission from Moscow. The legitimate use of Arcos is unaffected by these decisions. . . .[13]

Labour M.P.'s put down a motion for a select committee to determine if Russia was guilty. Two Tory motions were submitted. One "applauded" the government's decision, the other "approved" it. The sponsors of the former motion, including Gervais Rentoul, Harold Macmillan, Arthur Hope, and Frederick Hall,seemed elated. E. Hilton Young, Edward Cadogan, Anthony Eden, Ralph Glyn, and Oliver Stanley, the authors of the latter, apparently felt the government had no choice.[14] The views of Hilton Young and Stanley, both "conciliators," perhaps reflected the sentiments of other backbenchers who previously had urged caution on the government.

In introducing the Labour motion on May 26, J. R. Clynes stated that the raid epitomized the Tories' hatred of Russia. He warned that the break would increase international tensions, reduce trade, and intensify Soviet propaganda. The Blue Book on the seized documents was a "bright diverting, comic publication."[15]

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[13] Debates, CCVI (May 24, 1927), cols. 1842-49. The two documents on China may have come into British hands as a result of an April raid on the Soviets' Peking embassy by the Northern Chinese government; see The Times, May 6, 1927, p. 15.

[14] The Times, May 25, 1927, p. 16.

[15] Debates, CCVI (May 26, 1927), cols. 2195-2204.

Believing that Soviet guilt was established beyond any doubt, Chamberlain would not accept a select committee. He also cited other incriminating documents: "We have pushed patience to the point at which further persistence in it would be weakness or acquiescence in dupery." Continued diplomatic ties also would be a "continual source of irritation and danger" to the world. He used the example of the United States to show that trade with Russia was not dependent upon a commercial agreement or diplomatic recognition.[16] In essence he now adopted the zealots' arguments.

Lloyd George believed that Chamberlain's hand had been forced by "hot headed" Joynson-Hicks. Chamberlain's justification for the Arcos raid was "feeble" because every government engaged in espionage. Had Lloyd George been prime minister, he would have withdrawn the special privileges of the Trade Agreement and deported those found guilty, but he never would have broken relations, "one of the riskiest and most hazardous decisions ever taken by a Government."[17]

Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, (House of Commons and Command), (Russia no. 2, 1927), Cmnd. 2874, "Documents Illustrating the Hostile Activities of the Soviet Government and Third International against Great Britain," (London, 1927). The two documents on China also were included.

[16] Ibid., cols. 2204-18.

[17] Ibid., cols. 2218-34.

Several Tory backbenchers elaborated on the Foreign Secretary's defense.[18] The Home Secretary tried to demonstrate that his personal feelings were irrelevant. After the War Secretary had informed him of the missing document on May 11, he consulted with the Prime Minister who authorized the search. He then saw Chamberlain who asked if he would react as strongly if the document was thought to be in a London business house not connected with Russia. When Joynson-Hicks replied affirmatively, Chamberlain said, "Very well then, raid it."[19]

Pleased by a Labourite's assertion that he and other zealots were responsible for the break, Oliver Locker-Lampson congratulated the government for "making a most effective spring cleaning and in getting rid of much rubbish." The official policy of moderation had been dangerous in the face of a "fully armed" enemy who understood only brute force. By casting out the "manure of Moscow" Britain would deal Bolshevism a mortal blow.[20] Even Thomas Moore, a former "conciliator," believed that the Arcos revelations left the government with no option. Communism now should be treated as any other "infectious disease." However, Moore asked for

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[18] Ibid., cols. 2234-40, 2240-43, 2284-91.

[19] Ibid., cols. 2298-2310.

[20] Ibid., cols. 2253-56.

a retention of the Trade Agreement stripped of the diplomatic privileges: by cutting the trade link Britain would add to Europe's economic problems.[21] His plea was ignored. Commons endorsed the motion "applauding" the government's decision by an overwhelming vote of 346 to 98. No Tories voted with the Opposition, but 26 backbenchers were paired or abstained.[22]

Tory papers offered a varied response. The Times conceded that European stability might suffer and needed trade forfeited, but the "cause of civilisation" would be harmed by maintaining a "palpable fraud." The Daily Telegraph agreed that the trade loss was nothing compared to the cost of domestic unrest fomented by "insidious Communistic poison." The Western Mail cried, "Communism must be made a crime here." However, these papers explained that relations could be resumed if the Soviets repented.[23] Extremist newspapers were overjoyed. The Daily Mail credited its readers with helping the nation restore "its

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[21] Ibid., cols. 2272-79.

[22] The Times, May 28, 1927, p. 12. For favorable comments from a number of Tory backbenchers, see Western Mail, May 25, 1927, p. 9. Backbencher Frank Nelson was one of those who abstained.

[23] The Times, May 25, p. 17, May 26, 1927, p. 17; Daily Telegraph, May 25, 1927, p. 12; Western Mail, May 25, 1927, p. 8.

honour and its freedom." The Morning Post regretted that the move was not taken in concert with other nations.[24] The editor of the English Review, Ernest Remnant, perhaps stated the hopes of "rightist" Tories when he explained that Soviet prestige would suffer a "serious blow." Moreover, if Britain led an economic boycott of Russia "the Soviet scorpion would sting itself to death."[25]

"Conciliatory" journals expressed regrets. Despite the irrefutable case against Russia, the Spectator felt Chamberlain's oft-repeated arguments against a break remained valid. Time and Tide claimed the "missing document" was a ruse conjured up by anti-Bolshevik ministers. The Saturday Review charged that the government was forced to justify their authorization of the raid. In its view the only advantages were that the Home Secretary and the proprietors of the Daily Mail would sleep easier.[26] After the Kuomintang had turned against the Communists in April, Garvin resumed his advocacy of a detente. He recalled that Britain had not severed relations with France or Turkey at the turn of the century despite their anti-British intrigues.

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[24] Daily Mail, May 25, p. 10, May 27, 1927, p. 10; Morning Post, May 26, 1927, p. 12.

[25] English Review, XLIV (June, 1927), 647-50.

[26] Spectator, CXXXVIII (May 28, 1927), 932; Time and Tide, VIII (May 27, 1927), 481; Saturday Review, CXLIII (May 28, 1927), 812-13.

In his view, "parliamentary considerations" forced a break at a time when a "constructive solution" was in sight.[27]

Several ministers defended the government's action.[28] Alleging that international confidence and security had improved over the past year, Balfour predicted no "deleterious consequences whatever."[29] In a surprisingly restrained speech Birkenhead explained that Britain's international prestige would increase. Moreover, the Soviets would continue to trade because it helped sustain their currency.[30] But in private Birkenhead was less guarded:

> Personally I am delighted, though I think we ought to have done so the moment the General Election was over; and I have been trying to procure such a decision ever since. I am satisfied that we are absolutely right and shall sustain no injury of any kind in consequence of this step. . . . We have got rid of the hypocrisy of pretending to have friendly relations with this gang of murderers, revolutionaries, and thieves. I breathe quite differently now that we have purged our capital of these unclean and treacherous elements.[31]

Even Lord Irwin, a longtime opponent of a break, did not

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[27] Observer, May 29, 1927, p. 16. The Conservative Evening Standard and the Daily Express also deplored the break; see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 285, and Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 690.

[28] E.g., Bilainkin, Maisky, p. 68, and The Times, June 7, 1927, p. 14.

[29] Lords Debates, LXVII (May 31, 1927), cols. 688-94.

[30] Ibid., cols. 702-6.

[31] Birkenhead to Irwin, May 26, 1927, cited by Birkenhead, F.E., pp. 538-39.

object.[32] Sir Alfred Mond perhaps stated the dominant Tory reaction most succinctly, "Thank God they are going."[33]

The events of May, 1927 were a landmark in Anglo-Soviet relations, but many of the details still are unknown. As in the Zinoviev letter case, the missing document was not found. The implicated employees of the Soviet Trade Delegation were not brought to trial, and the government did not reveal the link between the Trade Delegation and the alleged spy ring. There is no available evidence to prove if the raid was a ruse.

Joynson-Hicks certainly realized that another major provocation would mean a break, and several Arcos-type raids elsewhere had produced incriminating documents.[34] Government officials were aware of the activities at Soviet House. On December 8, 1926 the Foreign Under-Secretary had suggested

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[32] Irwin to Cecil, July 16, 1927, Cecil Papers, Add. MSS, 51084.

[33] The Times, June 3, 1927, p. 14. In National Review, LXXXIX (July, 1927), 685-92, Alfred Knox detailed the zealots' reaction, stressing especially a revival of British prestige and the elimination of hypocrisy.

[34] On May 4, 1924 German police had invaded the offices of the Soviet Trade Delegation in Berlin. Although a Russo-German break did not follow, the captured documents suggested that the Soviets had been promoting more than trade; see The Times, May 5, 1924, p. 14. And just a month before the British raid, the Northern Chinese government raided the Soviet embassy in Peking and unearthed evidence documenting revolutionary activity there. The raid was given widespread coverage in the Tory press; see Observer, May 1, 1927, p. 16, and The Times, May 6, 1927, p. 15. The National Review, LXXXIX (May, 1927), 318-19, urged Joynson-Hicks to follow suit.

that if an excuse to sever relations was needed, "I think that the Soviet Mission acting as the transmitter of certain telegrams would of itself justify us."[35] If Joynson-Hicks believed this, a commercial development may have prompted him to move quickly. Just a few days before the raid, Soviet trade representatives obtained from the London Midland Bank £ 10 million in long-term credits for industrial machinery orders. But the contract was not signed yet when the police moved. The Home Secretary may have felt that the agreement would strengthen the supporters of a detente.[36] However, by stating that the missing document first was brought to his attention by the War Secretary, Joynson-Hicks seemingly cleared himself. Moreover, Baldwin and Chamberlain apparently were convinced by his testimony. In any event, Joynson-Hicks was responsible for making the Arcos raid a major event.

The immediate reactions of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary are also unclear. Baldwin's biographers state that he and Chamberlain were "reluctant" to endorse the raid, but give no evidence.[37] Since Baldwin and

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[35] Godfrey Locker-Lampson to Tyrrell, Dec. 8, 1926, FO 371/11787.

[36] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 685-86. Sir Allan Smith, the ex-Tory M.P. and longtime moderate on Russia because of his affiliation with the engineering industry, regretted that the raid upset the Midland agreement; see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 274.

[37] Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 458.

Chamberlain knew the February 23 note was a final warning, they must have foreseen the results of their approval.

The government was confronted with a dilemma when the missing document was not found. The confiscated materials really were no more inflammatory than Soviet press statements. If the Cabinet admitted failure, the Trade Agreement violation could not have been justified. Exactly why the Cabinet broke relations is unknown; it probably was deemed necessary once the raid occurred. Even before receiving a full report on the raid, Chamberlain told the French Premier that he "doubted" if relations would continue.[38] To justify abandoning his earlier policy, Chamberlain had to strengthen Britain's case. No doubt, he was responsible for including the two documents on China which Baldwin referred to in Commons. And these were important. As an anonymous Tory M.P. noted in the Spectator: "It was the Borodin and Rosengolz revelations which came home to the House with crushing effect, rather than the melodramatic incidents connected with the Arcos raid."[39]

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[38] Record of a Conversation between Austen Chamberlain and M. Briand, May 18, 1927, British Documents, ser. 1a, III, 309.

[39] Spectator, CXXXVIII (May 28, 1927), 935. For a similar statement, see Observer, May 29, 1927, p. 16. In his later explanations to foreign statesmen, Chamberlain always emphasized these two documents more strongly than the Arcos materials; e.g., Note by Mr. Selby (Foreign Office civil servant), enclosed in Chamberlain to Tyrrell, June 16, 1927, British Documents, ser. 1a, III, 373.

The most intriguing question centers on the motivations behind Chamberlain's about-face. Perhaps he simply tired of the fight to maintain relations against an increasingly powerful opposition. And the ultimatum of February 23 had sharply limited his options. However, other Cabinet opponents of a break apparently put up a strong rear guard defense, for the minutes of May 23 stated that there was only "general agreement" for a break. In February the Cabinet "generally" had agreed to continue relations. These words suggest that by May only a few ministers had changed their views. Perhaps Chamberlain's switch was the key to the outcome on May 23.

The real victors, of course, were the Tory zealots. As J. L. Garvin wrote, "Arcos was their cake, and they have eaten it."[40] By failing to discipline his colleagues, Baldwin unwittingly laid the groundwork. One correspondent noted, "The strength of those members of the Cabinet who advocate a break with Russia is the accomplished fact of the raid."[41]

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[40] Observer, May 29, 1927, p. 16.

[41] Ibid., May 22, 1927, pp. 17-18. In his autobiography, Some Memories (London, 1958), p. 142, n. 2, Lord Eustace Percy wrote: "The raid was simply the sort of blunder which a temperamental Home Secretary is always liable to commit on misleading information, and which it is difficult for the Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister either to veto in advance or to refuse to support afterwards. Whether such a Home Secretary would not be well-advised to purge his mistake by resignation, is a matter of opinion."

On the political side, the rupture helped to quiet unrest within the Tory party. The National Review applauded the Cabinet's decision to disavow "defeatism." One backbencher was convinced that it gave the government a "new lease of life."[42] This latter statement perhaps was overstated, but the thought might have influenced the Cabinet. Conversely, one minister feared that the break would alienate the left wing of the party.[43] But this did not happen. During the final two years of Baldwin's rule Russia never was more than a minor issue in British politics.

The Aftermath

In the weeks following the break the government repeatedly denied any ulterior motives.[44] The Soviets seemingly were unconvinced, Litvinov claiming it was a pretext for renewed intervention.[45] Tensions mounted when the Soviet ambassador to Poland was assassinated in Warsaw on June 7. The Soviets immediately linked the murder to

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[42] National Review, LXXXIX (June, 1927), 503-6; Western Mail, May 25, 1927, p. 9.

[43] Cecil to Irwin, June 7, 1927, Cecil Papers, Add. MSS, 51084.

[44] E.g., the speeches by Baldwin and Birkenhead in The Times, May 28, p. 7, June 6, 1927, p. 12.

[45] Soviet Documents, II, 209-12.

to a British plot.[46] Throughout the summer they cultivated the war scare theme. Several citizens accused of spying for Britain were executed.[47]

A few Tories provided a slight basis for the Soviet allegations. For several weeks in June the Morning Post asked Britain to prevent other nations from dealing with the Soviets. The English Review advocated an economic boycott.[48] However, these papers did not even allude to a military crusade. Most Tory papers anticipated renewed relations if the Soviets repented, and they denied any British plot.[49]

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[46] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 740.

[47] Spectator, CXXXVIII (June 18, 1927), 1056; The Times, June 11, 1927, p. 12. There were several motivations for the war scare. In part it stemmed from an erosion of Soviet confidence in Germany; her friendship was regarded as the key to Moscow's security. In the summer the Soviets apparently believed that Stresemann was establishing too close a relationship with the West; see Harvey Dyck, "German-Soviet Relations and the Anglo-Soviet Break, 1927," Slavic Review, XXV (March, 1966), 79. More important, the war scare was tied to the internal power struggle then nearing a climax. Although Stalin had reduced the power of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition a year earlier, they remained a formidable threat; he emphasized the war scare to force Trotsky to abandon his stand in the face of a foreign threat or to expose him as an intriguer whose activities were harming the state at a critical time. Litvinov and Chicherin admitted privately that no Western government was preparing an attack. Moreover, the Soviets made no attempt to bolster their armed forces; see Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, pp. 172-79, and Robert Wesson, Soviet Foreign Policy in Perspective (Homewood, Ill., 1969), pp. 104-6.

[48] Morning Post, June 13, 1927, p. 10; English Review, XLIV (June, 1927), 647-50.

[49] E.g., The Times, June 11, 1927, p. 13; Observer, June 12, 1927, p. 16; and Spectator, CXXXVIII (June 18, 1927), 1056.

Even Churchill and Joynson-Hicks said only that the Soviets were not fit to deal with civilized nations.[50] In public and in private Chamberlain repudiated the Soviet charges.[51]

The war scare subsided after Trotsky was expelled from the Communist party in November. After this time Tory interest in Russia was greatly reduced. In parliament there were no debates and few questions until after the Tory government left office in June, 1929. Editorial comments appeared infrequently. "Conciliatory" journals rarely asked for a rapprochement with Russia.[52] Tory zealots also said little after they celebrated their victory with a rally on July 15, 1927.[53] The Conservative Conference held in

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[50] Emrys Hughes, Bolshevik Bogey in Britain (Glasgow, 1943), p. 40; The Times, July 1, 1927, p. 9.

[51] Debates, CCVIII (July 28, 1927), cols. 1527-28; minute by Chamberlain, Jan. 5, 1928, FO 371/13270.

[52] Observer, Nov. 6, p. 16, Nov. 20, p. 17, Dec. 11, 1927, p. 17; Saturday Review, CXLIV (Nov. 26, 1927), 719, (Dec. 10, 1927), 803; Spectator, CXL (Feb. 25, 1928), 253-54; Daily Express, Feb. 2, 1928, cited by William P. Coates, Why Anglo-Russian Diplomatic Relations Should be Restored (London, 1928), p. 46. Before Arcos, these "conciliatory" papers had requested an agreement much more frequently.

[53] The Times, July 16, 1927, p. 7. The Daily Mail continued its boycott campaign against Soviet oil products. It claimed victory on Nov. 27, 1927, p. 10, but only a small percentage of British oil consumers had pledged support. In the summer of 1928 the Daily Mail quietly dropped the crusade, and the following spring Russian Oil Products, Limited, signed an advantageous agreement with large British-owned oil combines; see The Times, March 4, 1929, p. 16, and Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 291-94. The Association of British Creditors of Russia backed the Daily Mail; see The Times, July 28, 1927, p. 17.

October, 1927 did not act on a resolution approving the government's efforts to resist Soviet subversion; a year later Russia did not even appear on the agenda.[54] In a speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in November, 1927 Baldwin touched briefly on Russia. At the Guildhall the following year, his major foreign policy address ignored Russia completely.[55] In October, 1928 the new Tory attitude was epitomized by the Prime Minister's request for a one-page Foreign Office memorandum on Russia to refresh his memory.[56] Chamberlain met with the Soviets only once after Arcos. At their request he talked briefly with Litvinov in Geneva on December 5, 1927. The joint communique stated that "it was not found possible to reach any basis of agreement."[57]

This lack of interest in Russia was caused by a number of factors. Most important, the severance of relations eliminated the greatest irritant for most Tories. And the Labour party cooled considerably toward Russia.[58]

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[54] Conservative Conference Minutes, 1927, p. 36.

[55] The Times, Nov. 10, 1927, p. 15, Nov. 10, 1928, p. 8.

[56] Unsigned memorandum, Oct. 26, 1928, Baldwin Papers, vol. 113, p. 106. See also G. M. Young, Stanley Baldwin, (London, 1952), p. 61.

[57] The Times, Dec. 6, 1927, p. 16; George Slocombe, The Tumult and the Shouting (London, 1926), pp. 284-93. Chamberlain previously had told the Cabinet that he wanted to avoid the meeting, but he felt it would be rude to refuse; see Cabinet minutes, Nov. 30, 1927, CAB 23/55.

[58] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 696-97.

In the absence of Labour pressure for a rapprochement, Tories easily could ignore the issue. Membership in the British Communist party also declined precipitously. Industrial strife lessened as trade unions became more cautious. In September, 1927 the TUC broke off negotiations with Soviet trade unions, thus greatly reducing Tory fears of Soviet subversion in Britain.[59] Some Tories had a ready explanation for the industrial tranquility. In February, 1929 Winston Churchill claimed this "best period of peace in industry for a whole generation" had resulted from the diplomatic break.[60] When the execution of the two defendants in the famous Sacco-Vanzetti case led to riots on the Continent, the Daily Mail pointed to the ouster of the Bolsheviks as the reason why Britain had remained calm.[61]

Moreover, there were no incidents like the Zinoviev letter to inflame Conservatives. The Soviets were implicated in only one insignificant domestic issue during this period. In the summer of 1928 two Russian trade banks in London were

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See also Robert Boothby's remarks in Debates, CCVIII (July 11, 1927), cols. 824-25.

[59] Henry Pelling, The British Communist Party: a Historical Profile (New York, 1958), pp. 36-46; Taylor, English History, pp. 249-50. For two examples of the Tory reaction, see Daily Telegraph, Sept. 9, 1927, p. 8, and The Times, Sept. 9, 1927, p. 11.

[60] The Times, Feb. 13, 1929, p. 16.

[61] Daily Mail, Nov. 28, 1927, p. 10.

accused of sending funds to the British Communist party.[62] Three Soviet employees were expelled, but the Tories remained virtually silent.[63] The Soviets' waning revolutionary spirit and decreasing interest in foreign affairs also helped to calm the Conservatives. During these two years Soviet attention was focused on the destruction of the Trotsky opposition and on Stalin's reconstruction of the state.[64]

After the Arcos raid commerce provided the only link between Britain and Russia. With a million Britons unemployed, government leaders repeatedly welcomed Russian trade.[65] However, the Midland Bank agreement was cancelled, and Soviet purchases declined. Orders placed in Britain during the six months prior to the break had averaged over £1.6 million per month. Within four months after Arcos the figure dropped to £ 200,000. This resulted in part from the increased cost of doing business in Britain: banks demanded higher credit terms, and the price for discounting Russian

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[62] Debates, CCXVIII (June 11, 1928), cols. 635-43.

[63] For a typically placid response, see The Times, June 12, 1928, p. 17.

[64] Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: the History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67 (New York, 1968), pp. 165-67, 181-90; Wesson, Soviet Foreign Policy in Perspective, pp. 105-15.

[65] E.g., Joynson-Hicks' remarks in The Times, July 14, 1927, p. 9.

bills soared. But the Soviets also may have reduced their orders to demonstrate the need for renewing diplomatic relations.[66]

"Conciliatory" journals felt the loss of trade was too high a price to pay for trying to teach Russia a lesson.[67] Some commercial and industrial interests agreed.[68] The government, however, blamed the Soviets for the trade decline.[69]

In 1928 British exports to Russia totalled only £4.8 million, down from £11.3 million the year before. This decline came at a time when Russia's imports were increasing rapidly as a result of the Five-Year Plan. The Soviets also began to offer lucrative industrial concessions to foreign companies, but Britain obtained none. In fact, only two of the six concessions granted to British firms since 1917 remained operative.[70] Some "conciliatory"

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[66] Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 694-95.

[67] Daily Express, Nov. 15, 1927, cited by Coates, Why Anglo-Soviet Diplomatic Relations Should be Restored, p. 46; Spectator, CXXXIX (Dec. 10, 1927), 1036; Time and Tide, IX (March 23, 1928), 277.

[68] For statements by prominent businessmen, see Coates, Why Anglo-Soviet Diplomatic Relations Should be Restored, pp. 35-37, 53-54.

[69] E.g., the remarks of Joynson-Hicks and Birkenhead in The Times, Nov. 14, 1927, p. 6, March 29, 1928, p. 18; and an unsigned memorandum by the Board of Trade, March n.d., 1928, FO 371/13310.

[70] Debates, CCXXII (Nov. 20, 1928), cols. 1565-66.

journals and politicians used these statistics when requesting a resumption of trade relations.[71] But the government would not even consider extending the Export Credits Scheme.[72]

In the spring of 1929 a delegation of British businessmen, including a number of Tories, visited Russia in the hope of expanding trade.[73] But the trip was fruitless. The Soviets emphasized that trade would increase only when relations were restored and Britain extended a loan.[74] Chamberlain emphatically vetoed both suggestions.[75] A short time later the Tories were turned out of office. During the election campaign the Soviet question was virtually ignored.

The Labour party often charged that the government tried to isolate the Soviets in the two years following the diplomatic break. Most Tories replied that Russia's in-

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[71] E.g., Spectator, CXLI (Dec. 22, 1928), 944; Time and Tide, IX (Dec. 21, 1928), 1242; Saturday Review, CXLVII (Jan. 5, 1929), 2-3; and a letter from Robert Boothby in The Times, Dec. 15, 1928, p. 12.

[72] Debates, CCXXIII (Nov. 26, 1928), cols. 60-61.

[73] For a concise summary of the trip, see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 316-20. Many items in FO 371/14029, and an unsigned memorandum, Jan. 6, 1929, in the Baldwin Papers, vol. 113, pp. 134-40, give background information.

[74] The Times, April 8, 1929, p. 12; Daily Telegraph, April 8, 1929, p. 10.

[75] Debates, CCXXVII (April 22, 1929), cols. 622-23.

flexibility caused the stalemate. Actually, Britain's policy probably was motivated by a realization that formal ties with Russia were not essential. Chamberlain, along with most Tories, believed the disadvantages of re-establishing relations clearly outweighed the advantages. Likewise, the Soviets were not affected adversely by the break. As long as the European diplomatic equilibrium remained constant, the two nations simply did not need each other. In the absence of any pressing need, neither side was willing to soften their conditions for a rapprochement. This attitude kept them as far apart at the end of the decade as they had been at the beginning.

From 1929 until World War II Russia remained a minor issue for most Tories.[76] However, one important development during the 1930's supposedly resulted largely from the Tories' previous opinions of Soviet Russia. Some historians claim that the Conservatives' alleged anti-Soviet bias was a key ingredient in the formulation of Britain's appeasement policy toward Nazi Germany.[77] The following list of leading Tories, along with their views of British policy toward Russia in the 1920's and toward Germany in

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[76]Donald Lammers, "British Foreign Policy, 1929-1934: the Problem of Soviet Russia," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1960), adequately describes Tory reactions within the context of his diplomatic study.

[77]E.g., Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, The Appeasers (Boston, 1963), pp. 7-8.

the 1930's shows, on the contrary, that there is no simple correlation between attitudes toward Russia and positions on appeasement.[78]

Nancy Astor, M.P., "conciliator" -- pro-appeasement
J. L. Garvin, "conciliator" -- pro-appeasement
Thomas Moore, M.P., "conciliator" -- pro-appeasement
Oliver Stanley, M.P., "conciliator" -- pro-appeasement
Robert Boothby, "conciliator" -- anti-appeasement
Viscount Cecil, "conciliator" -- anti-appeasement
Duff Cooper, M.P., "conciliator" -- anti-appeasement
Harold Macmillan, "conciliator" -- anti-appeasement
Winston Churchill, "rightist" -- anti-appeasement
Samuel Hoare, "rightist" -- pro-appeasement
Douglas Hogg, "rightist" -- pro-appeasement
Wilfred Ashley, M.P., "rightist" -- pro-appeasement
Leopold Amery, "centrist" -- anti-appeasement
Anthony Eden, M.P., "centrist" -- anti-appeasement
Austen Chamberlain, "centrist" -- anti-appeasement
Stanley Baldwin, "centrist" -- pro-appeasement
Lord Halifax, "centrist" -- pro-appeasement

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[78]Tory opinions on appeasement can be found in Ibid., passim, and Lammers, Explaining Munich, pp. 52-53.

CONCLUSION

The Tories clearly did not share a monolithic view of Soviet Russia. Since the "ultras" saw the Soviets as the mortal enemy of mankind, they wanted no contact with them under any circumstance. The "ultras" believed the Soviets were being devious even when they acted with restraint. The "rightists" were not so quick to ostracize Russia from the world community. If the Soviets paid their debts, eliminated international intrigue, and provided facilities for foreign traders, these Tories would not have objected to diplomatic relations. On the other hand, the "centrists" accorded Russia the same diplomatic treatment given other unfriendly countries. Most important, they were willing to compromise. If the Soviets honored only certain classes of debts and disavowed propaganda, the "centrists" would have welcomed a rapprochement, especially because of its commercial benefits. But, much to the chagrin of the small band of "conciliators," the "centrists" did not favor initiating talks for a detente until the Soviets first complied with their terms. The "conciliators" consistently urged Britain to take an unconditional first step toward reconciliation, usually by extending the Export Credits Scheme or by granting full ceremonial recognition.

What prompted individual Tories to adopt a particular

viewpoint? For the "ultras," "rightists," and "centrists," there is no definite answer because they never really examined the question clearly and directly. The leading "ultras" included L. J. Maxse, editor of the National Review, H. A. Gwynne, editor of the Morning Post, and a handful of backbenchers like John Gretton and Henry Page Croft. Their extremist views probably were shaped by the old romantic Tory concept of a pre-capitalist organic society. The leading figures within the larger group of "rightists" included such prominent party leaders as Curzon, Birkenhead, Joynson-Hicks, and Churchill; important backbenchers like Guy Kindersley, Oliver Locker-Lampson, and Alfred Knox; and the editor of the Daily Mail, Thomas Marlowe. This diverse group apparently was only partially influenced by the Tory ethos. More important, they probably believed the Soviets presented a serious threat to British interests. The "centrists," the largest group, consisted of an apparent majority of the Tory backbenchers and ministers, including Austen Chamberlain, Bonar Law, Lord Balfour, Robert Horne, Stanley Baldwin, and Lord Eustace Percy. Because they analyzed diplomatic developments without strong ideological overtones, this group reflected the pragmatic tradition within the Tory party. They usually saw the Soviets as more of a nuisance than a threat.

Perhaps because the views of the "conciliators" were unorthodox in the Tory party, they did explain their position. Significantly, their motivations differed. Backbenchers Allan Smith, P. J. Hannon, and Thomas Moore sought to revive the British economy with an Anglo-Soviet rapprochement. Backbenchers Robert Boothby and W. P. Templeton had a particular interest in saving the herring trade in their constituencies. John St. Loe Strachey, the editor of the Spectator, J. L. Garvin, editor of the Observer, and backbencher Duff Cooper were concerned primarily with strengthening world peace. Lord Robert Cecil hoped to bolster the League of Nations.

Tories from similar backgrounds often had different outlooks. Both Thomas Moore and Alfred Knox had served with the Whites, but Moore became a "conciliator" and Knox a "rightist." The Duke of Northumberland was an "ultra" and his brother, Lord Eustace Percy, a "centrist." At least two backbenchers had lost property in Russia: J. D. Rees was a "rightist" and Victor Warrender a "centrist." Although businessman A. G. Marshall had suffered the same fate, he was a "conciliator." Such examples are common.

Tory estimates of Bolshevism also differed considerably. In fact, after 1919 most Tories seemed to ignore the Soviets' ideological tenets. Karl Marx was rarely mentioned

by politicians in the 1920's.[1] Conservative journals occasionally printed articles on the Communist "faith" by intellectuals or journalists, but most editorial writers avoided the subject.[2] The Conservative Central Office printed only two pamphlets on Communism, and both were brief and superficial.[3] The "centrists" apparently never analyzed Bolshevism. Their pragmatism perhaps led them to believe that it was irrelevant in international relations. But Garvin, Strachey, and Boothby, all "conciliators," seemed to think it was only a temporary expediency that would evolve into a mild form of socialism or even capitalism.

Only a few "ultras" and "rightists" wrote about Bolshevism. Though showing minor variations, the analyses by the Duke of Northumberland and Lord Sydenham reflect the "ultra" interpretation. Northumberland claimed that

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[1]This changed somewhat in the following decade. In 1933 Robert Bower, M.P., offered what was perhaps one of the first commentaries by a Tory politician on such essential ingredients of Marxism as the Hegelian dialectic, historical materialism, and the labor theory of value; see National Review, CI (September, 1933), 347-51. See also the following works by Tory backbenchers: John de Vere Loder, Bolshevism in Perspective (London, 1931), and Mark Patrick, Hammer and Sickle (London, 1933).

[2]For a sampling of these few analyses, see Morning Post, Feb. 4-Feb. 9, 1924, and National Review, LXXVIII (October, 1921), 194-208.

[3]Communism: What it is and What it Wants (London, 1924), pamphlet no. 2340; Communism Unmasked (London, 1924), Unionist Workers' Handbooks, no. 7.

Bolshevism was only the latest in a series of revolutionary movements founded on the erroneous belief that primitive man had lived in a "golden era" of perfect happiness.[4] In reality, medieval society had allowed man the greatest freedom and stability. But the Albigensians, the philosophes, the French revolutionaries, and other subversives had undermined the medieval synthesis. In the twentieth century "modern" Bolsheviks hoped to complete the destruction of civilization through unabashed class warfare. They were ably assisted by Freemasons, international Jews, Labourites, and International Workers of the World, to name just a few. This world-wide plot presented a grave threat to the West.

Lord Sydenham, an old Tory Imperialist, consistently viewed Bolshevism as evil vying with good for control of individuals and even entire nations.[5] Having succumbed to

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[4] This summary of Northumberland's views is based on two of his articles in the National Review, LXXVII (July, 1921), 617-33, LXXXIII (May, 1924), 365-85. Besides writing about the Bolshevik threat, he spoke frequently to Tory organizations and debated with Labour M.P.'s; see The Times, June 19, p. 13, July 8, 1920, p. 16, and Morning Post, March 2, 1921, p. 5. Occasionally his fervor was costly: The Times, Nov. 18, 1921, p. 5, reported that the Duke lost a libel suit to a London Labour leader who claimed that the Duke labeled him a Bolshevik and a traitor. For L. J. Maxse's favorable comments about Northumberland's analysis, see National Review, LXXVI (October, 1920), 147-49.

[5] Sydenham's analysis was presented in his Studies of an Imperialist (London, 1928), pp. 336-40; an article in The Russian Outlook, II (March 27, 1920), 1107; letters to the editor of The Times, Sept. 9, 1922, p. 6, July 12, p. 8, Oct. 28, 1924, p. 13; and speeches in Lords Debates, XXXIII

this wickedness, the Russian people were forced to endure a most despicable barbarism. Because Bolshevism was really the external manifestation of the evil latent in every man, the fight against it had to be waged on a spiritual plane. Britain, therefore, needed desperately to revive her past Christian ideals.

"Rightist" views of Bolshevism ranged widely, but those expressed by Birkenhead and Churchill were typical. Birkenhead saw the Soviets as a band of fanatical extremists who had succumbed to the pressures of modern society.[6] Instead of dealing realistically with social problems resulting from industrialization, they foolishly adopted a cure infinitely worse than the original illness. Immorality, servility, and cynicism clouded their reason. But an educated populace need not fear their machinations. When the Russian people revolted against their oppressors, Bolshevism would disappear forever.

Churchill often compared Bolshevism to a disease descending on an unsuspecting nation, throwing the victims into a state of frenzied anarchy.[7] The mortality rate was

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(Feb. 25, 1919), cols. 302-7, LI (July 5, 1922), cols. 258-63.

[6]Birkenhead detailed his views in three of his works: Law, Life, and Letters (London, 1927), II, 298-313; Turning Points in History (London, 1929), pp. 199-211; and Last Essays (London, 1930), pp. 140-60.

[7]For a sampling of Churchill's diverse views,

high, but the pestilence soon dissipated, leaving a shattered populace to recover the use of reason. Nations with a long history of social injustice were most susceptible because Bolshevism appealed to the worst elements in a backward and suppressed citizenry. The carriers of the disease, for whom Churchill reserved his greatest contempt, were driving men into a barbarism far worse than that of the Stone Age. But these miscreants could not endure, their concepts of liberty, progress, and Utopia being antithetical to human nature.

From this summary it is evident that the Tories as a whole never really touched on the essence of Bolshevism. While an irrational fear of the Bolshevik creed was probably the wellspring of the "ultra" attitude toward Soviet Russia, what factors molded the opinions of the vast majority of Tories? Soviet actions and words were certainly important. The Bolsheviks repeatedly called for the destruction of Britain and the Empire. Their assistance to revolutionary and nationalist movements around the world convinced many Tories of their danger. "Ultras"and "rightists" took Soviet utterances most seriously.

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see The Aftermath, pp. 60-77; The Russian Outlook, I (July 26, 1919), supplement, iv-viii; Debates, CXVI (May 29, 1919), cols. 1526-28; The Times, Jan.5, 1920, p. 7; and his Great Contemporaries (London, 1937), pp. 167-74 (this section was written during the 1920's).

But most Tories' views were influenced primarily by a series of spectacular--and sometimes peripheral--events beginning in 1917 and ending with the Arcos raid in 1927. In the first place most Tories never forgave the Bolsheviks for withdrawing from the war. Then in 1919 ephemeral White military successes helped to forge a virulent anti-Bolshevism. During the last years of the Coalition many Tory opinions of Russia were really defensive reactions to Lloyd-George's political conduct. Most Tories believed he would sign a dishonorable settlement with Russia, and they regretted his decision to act unilaterally despite French and Italian criticisms. Lloyd George exploited the Russian question in part for domestic purposes, and many Tories retaliated by using the same issue to help force his downfall. Russia was a partisan political issue especially during the election campaign of 1924. At that time Tories skillfully utilized the two Treaties and the Zinoviev letter to great advantage. From 1925 to 1927 the general strike and the Chinese revolution greatly affected Tory opinions of Russia.

Some peripheral factors continually influenced Tory opinions in the 1920's. The depressed British economy, for example, was certainly an important consideration for the "conciliators." And "rightists" usually were concerned with domestic industrial unrest when they spoke about Russia.

Finally, most Tories probably kept an anxious eye on Labour's increasing power when they stated their views of Soviet Russia.

These developments during the decade help to explain why many Tories' views of Russia shifted. Some changes were almost dramatic. Captivated by his admiration for Lloyd George, Birkenhead advocated a detente with Russia during the Coalition era. After the general strike and the turmoil in China, "conciliators" Robert Boothby and J. L. Garvin moved sharply to the right for a time. Conversely, Samuel Hoare changed from a "rightist" to a "centrist" when he assumed office. In early 1923 Lord Curzon departed from his consistently hostile attitude toward Russia by urging a large grant for famine relief. Under the shadow of Nazi Germany in the following decade, even Winston Churchill worked hard for an alliance with Russia. In fact, only the "ultra" interpretation of Russia never wavered during the 1920's.

By exerting constant pressure on British policy-makers, the Tories definitely influenced Anglo-Soviet relations. Early in the 1920's Lloyd George might have offered the Soviets more lenient terms for a rapprochement had he not feared Tory opposition. The Labour Treaties in 1924 were ineffective because MacDonald could not soften the Tories' strong stand on debts without threatening the fall

of his government. Tory government leaders were in a similar position. Throughout this period Tory policy-makers were "centrists" and not "extremists," as has often been maintained. However, the leaders were under great pressure from the "rightists," who mobilized much more mass support than did the "conciliators." Accordingly, the leaders probably adopted a tougher attitude toward the Soviets than they would otherwise have done. While it cannot be stated categorically that "rightists" like Churchill and Birkenhead forced Austen Chamberlain to adopt certain policies, they certainly blocked the diplomatic avenues open to him. The events surrounding the Anglo-Soviet break in 1927 suggest that Chamberlain and other "centrists" finally succumbed to pressure from the right. Had this pressure been less intense, the Foreign Secretary might have been more patient with the Russians. Soviet intransigence obviously aided the "rightists." If the Soviets had been more cooperative, Chamberlain might have found it easier and more profitable politically to hold out longer.

The Tories alone were not responsible for the gulf between Soviet Russia and Britain in the 1920's. Even had they been less influential in the period or had they been more conciliatory, it would have been difficult for the two Powers to establish normal relations. The Russians were

often inflexible and sometimes provocative. The Tories were often hostile toward Soviet Russia, and always wary. The inevitable result was a series of diplomatic failures.

APPENDIX I

THE ZINOVIEV LETTER

To some extent the mystery surrounding the Zinoviev letter remains unsolved. Labourites maintain that it was a forgery which lost the election for them. Tories have insisted on its authenticity. Several years ago three Sunday Times reporters wrote an account indicating not only that the letter was a forgery but also that some Tories were involved in the episode.[1]

The reporters believe the letter was written in the summer of 1924 by a group of Russian émigrés in Berlin. Polish intelligence agents, anxious to prevent a rapprochement between Russia and the West, perhaps masterminded the scheme.[2] Another writer, Robin Lockhart, suggests the culprit was Sidney Reilly, a British secret service agent.[3] Known as "the spy who never made a mistake," Reilly had been involved in anti-Soviet plots since 1918 when he had tried

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[1]Unless otherwise indicated, this summary of the letter's history through November, 1924 is based on Lewis Chester, Stephen Fay, and Hugo Young, The Zinoviev Letter (Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 1-143.

[2]Additional support for this thesis can be found in Natalie Grant, "The Zinoviev Letter Case," Soviet Studies, XIX (October, 1967), 264-77.

[3]Robin Bruce Lockhart, Ace of Spies (London, 1966), pp. 119-29.

to assassinate Lenin.[4] According to Lockhart, Reilly ordered the forgery to revitalize the anti-Bolshevik movement, which had suffered a serious blow when a well-known member, Boris Savinkov, defected to Russia in the summer of 1924.

Late in the summer Polish intelligence agents probably delivered the forgery to Reilly who was then in Paris. The conspirators must have discussed ways of convincing the Labour government of its authenticity. Knowing of Reilly's reputation, they probably decided to rewrite it in his hand. He could explain convincingly that he had to return it to Soviet channels before it was missed.[5] Reilly apparently was the person who turned the document over to the Foreign Office on October 10. Because

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[4]For Reilly's autobiography, later edited by his wife, see The Adventures of Sidney Reilly (London, 1931). See also Lockhart, British Agent, pp. 320-21.

[5]This is not really considered in The Zinoviev Letter. It is based on a startling discovery made only in 1970. An archivist at the Harvard University Law Library found a glass plate negative of the Zinoviev letter in Russian script which was virtually identical to the English translation published by the Foreign Office on October 24, 1924; see William Butler, "Correspondence," Soviet Studies, XXI (January, 1970), 395-400. A British handwriting expert compared it to a facsimile of Sidney Reilly's last known letter in 1925 and concluded they were written by the same man; see Sunday Times, Feb. 8, Feb. 15, 1970. The Harvard text originally was in the possession of an American consul in Paris who had received it from an unknown agent. Reilly's wife claims he was in Paris in July and August, 1924, engaged in "a very important political transaction"; see Sunday Times, Feb. 15, 1970.

it was in his handwriting, he presumably revealed his identity. Circumstantial evidence supports this. When shown the letter, Permanent Under-Secretary Sir Eyre Crowe earmarked it for special attention. The Foreign Office received a continual flow of allegedly genuine Soviet documents, and it often took months to check the authenticity of each one. Because the contents of the Zinoviev letter were not extraordinary, Crowe probably knew it came from Reilly. Moreover, the intelligence branches of the Home Office, the Admiralty, and the War Office apparently did not question it.[6]

The plotters must have been anxious to see the letter made public. Two days before it was received by the Foreign Office, someone met with Conrad Donald im Thurn, a wartime British intelligence agent who was a director of a commercial firm run by Russian émigrés. This "someone" has not been identified, but he was probably a Polish agent working with Reilly. Im Thurn might have known him from wartime service.[7] The visitor claimed that Zinoviev had sent secret

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[6]For an explanation of the circulation of the letter within the Foreign Office by one of the participants, see Lord Strang, Home and Abroad (London, 1956), pp. 156-58.

[7]In Baldwin, p. 307, Middlemas and Barnes claim that this person was Reilly and that im Thurn was a German. As a reference, they cite The Zinoviev Letter. The authors of this book, however, point out that this unnamed person must have been a Polish intelligence agent; see pp. 188-89. And they went to great lengths to show that im Thurn was British despite his German name; see pp. 71-72. It is highly unlikely

instructions to British Communists. As a former intelligence agent, im Thurn's curiosity was aroused. Moreover, he was a staunch anti-Bolshevik whose company apparently would have suffered if Labour's treaties with Russia were approved by parliament.[8] When they met again on October 13, the informer divulged the letter's contents, claiming that it had reached England on September 25 and that Russian chargé Rakovsky, Labour backbencher James Maxton, and MacDonald knew about it. Outraged by the intimation that the government was concealing it deliberately, im Thurn told his old friend Guy Kindersley, an anti-Soviet Tory backbencher, who arranged a meeting with Lord Younger, the Treasurer of the Tory party, and F. S. Jackson, the Chairman. Anticipating a pre-election bombshell, they agreed to give im Thurn £7,500 if he produced a copy, which they would publish in The Times at an opportune moment.

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that Reilly himself was im Thurn's mysterious informer. As a secret agent he would have put his career in jeopardy if im Thurn told others.

But it should be noted that the authors of The Zinoviev Letter do not offer conclusive proof for naming a Polish agent; it is one of their weakest links. In view of the importance of this informer, a greater effort should have been made to identify him. For example, since this mysterious informer reappeared briefly in 1928, the authors should have discounted Reilly because he had returned to Russia in 1925 and was never heard from again. Apparently he was lured back by Soviet counterintelligence agents and promptly shot; see Lockhart, Ace of Spies, passim.

[8] Im Thurn later characterized the Soviets as "murderers, thieves, and moral perverts"; see his article in the National Review, XCII (January, 1929), 768-71.

Im Thurn demanded the money as a guarantee against loss for his apparently still unnamed informant.

After an investigation assisted by friends within the intelligence services, im Thurn discovered on October 18 that Naval intelligence had seen the letter. Three days later the head of an intelligence branch informed him by telephone that the Foreign Office soon would release it. On October 22 im Thurn told a Times correspondent that the government was withholding the letter. Without ever receiving it, or his money, im Thurn now dropped out of the picture.

On October 23 Admiral Sir Reginald Hall confided to his friend Thomas Marlowe, editor of the Daily Mail, that the government was concealing the letter for political reasons. A former Tory backbencher and wartime intelligence director, Hall probably had been told of the letter by a friend in intelligence. Marlowe then met with Sir Hugh Sinclair, head of overseas espionage, who pledged to deliver a copy the next day. Another retired intelligence officer, Colonel Frederick Browning, visited Marlowe and also promised a copy. Marlowe, Hall, Browning, and Sinclair had been closely associated since serving together during the war. None apparently were aware of the letter's origin or of the person who had delivered it to the Foreign Office. They honestly believed MacDonald was concealing an authentic

document. On Friday morning, October 24, Marlowe distributed his copies to other London Tory dailies for simultaneous publication the following day. Only The Times already knew about it. Unknown to Marlowe and his friends, the Foreign Office published the letter and sent MacDonald's corrected draft protest to Rakovsky on Friday afternoon. On the previous evening the editors of the Daily Mail and The Times had told the Foreign Office they would soon publish the letter. Eyre Crowe, who also believed it was authentic, apparently decided on quick action to protect the reputation of the Foreign Office.

After the election the lame-duck Labour government secretly investigated the letter's origin. Their efforts were hampered, however, by MacDonald's refusal to allow a parallel investigation into the roles of the civil servants and the intelligence branches. He apparently did so to prevent any unnecessary exposure of their operations and because he was convinced that Foreign Office officials had not acted in bad faith. The committee was unable to decide if it was a forgery.[9]

The new Conservative Cabinet also appointed a committee, but the details of their probe are not known.[10]

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[9]Middlemas, ed., Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary, I, 300-1.

[10]If a written record of their inquiry was kept, it probably was pilfered later or destroyed intentionally.

In announcing the results on December 15, Chamberlain stated, "It left not a shade of a shadow of a doubt as to the authenticity of the document." The committee went beyond the records of the Foreign Office: "We saw every witness that we thought necessary; we had before us whatever documents and information we required." The secret service also gave unspecified assistance. His explanation seemed convincing.

> The letter was first received by the Government from one source. We know its whole course from its origin until it reached our hands. The next thing that happened was that information was received by the Government of the existence of this letter from another source wholly independent of, and wholly unconnected with, the first source, and which did not know that we had had any prior indication that there was such a letter at all. The next was that from a third source, independent of both the others, not knowing either of the others and unknown to them, we got further evidence confirmatory of the authenticity of the document; and the last stage was that from a fourth source, independent of the first three, we got further confirmatory evidence.

These sources were "known to us and whose trustworthiness we have been in a position to prove over a space of time longer or shorter in the different cases." Chamberlain would not expand on this for "it is of the essence of a Secret Service that it must be secret."[11] A few days

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In 1966 the Labour government announced that many of the files on the Zinoviev letter were "missing." The only real clue unearthed at the P.R.O. was an index citation to a November 11 memorandum on the letter by Austen Chamberlain. Unfortunately, this document has been "withheld" by order of the Foreign Office; see CAB 24/168. Chamberlain gave an oral report on their findings at the Cabinet meeting of November 10, 1924, CAB 23/49.

[11] Debates, CLXXIX (Dec. 15, 1924), cols. 671-75.

earlier Joynson-Hicks had explained, "It would be impossible for reasons of safety to individual life, that the names of the people who produced this evidence should be given.[12] Tories considered the case closed.

For the next three years Labourites continued to probe informally. Their suspicions centered increasingly on J. D. Gregory, the head of the Northern Department at the Foreign Office who had signed the protest note. They believed that Gregory, a known anti-Bolshevik, had been involved in fabricating the letter and had leaked it to the press.[13] Early in 1928 the Zinoviev letter issue suddenly reappeared after Gregory and two other civil servants were accused of currency speculation.[14] During a routine investigation of the charges, MacDonald and J. H. Thomas announced that at the end of 1924 a servant of a woman friend of Gregory had testified that in October she overheard her employer and Gregory discussing a plot against the Labour government. Hoping to obtain a new inquiry into the Zinoviev letter, MacDonald obtained Baldwin's approval

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[12] Ibid., (Dec. 10, 1924), col. 311. For Neville Chamberlain's remarks, see The Times, Nov. 29, 1924, p. 14. Soviet statements can be found in Soviet Documents, II, 477-82.

[13] For Gregory's estimate of the Bolsheviks, see his On The Edge of Diplomacy, pp. 130-69.

[14] Chester, Fay, and Young, The Zinoviev Letter, pp. 144-58, contains the details.

for a debate on March 19, 1928.[15]

On March 4, 1928 the Observer printed a letter from Thomas Marlowe, the former editor of the Daily Mail, who stated that he had received separate copies of the Zinoviev letter from two trusted friends on October 24, 1924; he suggested none too subtly that they were civil servants. Marlowe claimed that he published the letter for patriotic reasons and denied communicating with Gregory.[16] Several Tory journals felt this revelation vindicated Labour's demand for a full investigation.[17]

Some politicians also were upset. Shortly before the debate Guy Kindersley went to the Conservative Central Office on routine business. The party's newly-appointed Publicity Director, Major Joseph Ball, mentioned that the government was concerned with the forthcoming debate. Kindersley apparently had not been involved with Marlowe in 1924, but he realized that no one in the Central Office knew of the Conservatives' role in the affair. He offered to produce the man who could enlighten everyone, Donald im Thurn.[18] On the

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[15]For the Cabinet's decision, see Cabinet minutes, Feb. 28, 1928, CAB 23/57.

[16]Observer, March 4, 1928, p. 17.

[17]E.g., Spectator, CXL (March 10, 1928), 349. For other Tory press comments favorable to an inquiry, see Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 192.

[18]This information is based on a private account written

morning of March 19 Kindersley brought im Thurn to a luncheon at the home of party Chairman J. C. C. Davidson. The other guests included Ball, Hogg, and Baldwin. The Prime Minister was shocked when Kindersley told him what had happened. It was decided that Baldwin should read to the House that afternoon a statement prepared in advance by im Thurn.[19]

In opening the debate MacDonald now based his request for an inquiry on Marlowe's letter, charging that civil servants from either the War Office, the Home Office, or the Admiralty had leaked the letter to influence the election.[20] In reply Baldwin first cast further light on the Conservative investigation of 1924: "According to the information which we have," Zinoviev had admitted in private that he wrote the letter. In November, 1924, Baldwin continued, Chicherin had told his colleagues that Albert Inkpin of the British Communist party had destroyed the original. As additional proof the Prime Minister claimed that the Soviets had shot a Russian accused of stealing the letter.

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by Kindersley in 1956; see Chester, Fay, and Young, The Zinoviev Letter, pp. 163-64. The Cabinet vetoed a new inquiry on the ground that they would be questioning the judgment of their committee of November, 1924; see Cabinet minutes, Feb. 28, 1928, CAB 23/57.

[19] James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, p. 204.

[20] Debates, CCXV (March 19, 1928), cols. 47-59.

Baldwin asserted that his next piece of evidence disproved any conspiracy and vindicated the Daily Mail. He vouched for im Thurn's character and claimed to have verified the manifesto as far as possible. Having been released only recently from a pledge of secrecy given to his informant, im Thurn stated that he was coming forward to clear the civil servants and the press. On October 8, 1924 he had met with a businessman in close touch with British Communists. After a routine business discussion he was told of the arrival of the Zinoviev letter at Communist party headquarters. When his friend supplied a copy the next morning, he became "very indignant" at the Soviets' attempt to foment revolution while they were trying to obtain a loan of "good British money." Im Thurn decided to inform the Foreign Office and the country after his informant settled his affairs and found a place of safety, for "his life would be in danger." After this had been done, im Thurn asked a "trusted City friend," in "close touch" with the Daily Mail, to arrange for publication. He concluded by denying that any government department had helped him.

Before introducing im Thurn's statement, Baldwin tried to syncronize it with Marlowe's. In particular he minimized the former editor's claim that he had received two copies of the letter from civil servants. He also noted that Marlowe was recalling events which had occurred three and a

half years before and that he had written his letter to the Observer while in France, "away from all his works of reference."[21] Labourites were unprepared for im Thurn's disclosure. Although subsequent speakers also demanded an inquiry, none challenged the discrepancies between the stories of Marlowe and im Thurn. Labour was defeated soundly in the vote, 326 to 132.

The Labour press agreed with Chicherin that Baldwin's speech was filled with "barefaced lies."[22] But Tory papers believed that im Thurn's statement finally settled the case.[23] Both sides apparently had grown weary of the controversy, for one interesting statement passed unnoticed. On March 26 Chamberlain told a Primrose League meeting that the Foreign Office's copy had not come from im Thurn or from his informant but from other trustworthy sources.[24]

After im Thurn's brief moment of prominence, he retreated into obscurity, but not before he collected part of the £7,500 promised in 1924. The Tories had never paid his "friend," probably because im Thurn did not produce a copy.

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[21] For Baldwin's speech, see Ibid., cols. 59-72.

[22] The Times, March 23, 1928, p. 14.

[23] Ibid., March 20, 1928, p. 14. See also Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 195.

[24] The Times, March 27, 1928, p. 18.

His testimony in 1928 apparently prompted them to pay up. Moreover, im Thurn told Major Ball he had received a cable from Warsaw saying that his friend was anxious for a settlement. On April 2 Davidson gave a personal check for £ 5,000 to Major Ball, who in turn paid im Thurn. In acknowledging payment im Thurn noted that his informer was about to depart for Argentina under an assumed name and would never be heard from again. Because the Tories had shortchanged him, im Thurn thought that he and Kindersley should be knighted. The Tories refused. When im Thurn died in 1930, Kindersley asked Baldwin to offer condolences to his widow. The Conservative leader wrote, "He was a man who was always ready to give himself to the services of his country."[25] In 1956 Kindersley wrote a draft history of his role in the affair which he intended to submit to the Daily Mail, an appropriate choice. He asked Lord Davidson (formerly J. C. C. Davidson) and Sir Joseph Ball for their comments. Several months later the two men persuaded Kindersley not to publish his story.[26]

No doubt, the Zinoviev letter will continue to attract attention. Despite the revelations of the Sunday Times reporters, a number of substantive questions remain

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[25]For the above, see Chester, Fay, and Young, The Zinoviev Letter, pp. 178-82.

[26]James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, pp. 203-4.

unanswered. Such issues as the exact origin of the letter and the method of transmission to Britain are not germane to this paper. However, these and other questions must be answered before a final judgment can be rendered on the extent of Tory involvement. One of the most intriguing problems which the reporters failed to touch on concerns im Thurn's statement in 1928. It conflicted in many ways with his diary of the events of 1924, which they used extensively. Most important, the diary did not mention a businessman close to the Communist party, and it also indicated that im Thurn never saw the letter. Thus he could not have given copies to the Foreign Office and to a "trusted" friend. Kindersley must have known that im Thurn was lying in 1928 because he had been in close contact with him in 1924. This leads to an important question. Did im Thurn and Kindersley tell Baldwin what they really knew about the events of 1924? The Prime Minister saw the discrepancies between the statements of Marlowe and im Thurn, and he must have asked questions. He claimed to have checked im Thurn's statement, but could not have done so very thoroughly for Marlowe actually had told the truth. Whether or not Baldwin knowingly read a lie to Commons on March 19 cannot be answered.

This, in turn, raises the central question. Did he believe the letter was genuine? If not, his statement was

merely another attempt to suppress the truth. However, the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of February 28, 1928 imply that the ministers still believed it was authentic: they feared a new inquiry would endanger "the position of the informants abroad as to the Zinovieff letter."[27] Baldwin's biographers claim he "remained convinced of the letter's authenticity to his dying day." The editor of Lord Davidson's papers maintains that the former party Chairman was persuaded similarly until the revelation by the Sunday Times reporters.[28] Moreover, in his statement on March 19 Baldwin offered to let MacDonald examine the government's evidence on the letter.[29] It is doubtful he would have done this knowing it was a fraud. Thus Baldwin could have seized upon im Thurn's statement, even knowing that it was false, to avoid a new inquiry which might have exposed British intelligence around the world. The key to solving this mystery perhaps lies buried in the investigation conducted by the Tories in 1924. Austen Chamberlain stated that the government received verification of the letter from four sources. If Sidney Reilly and Polish intelligence were two of the informers, who were the others? The list of such

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[27]Cabinet minutes, Feb. 28, 1928, CAB 23/57.

[28]Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin, p. 302; James, ed., Memoirs of a Conservative, p. 199.

[29]Debates, CCXV (March 17, 1928), col. 62.

vexing questions is long, and the complete story is still unknown.

Conservatives often have been accused of engaging in a plot. The authors of The Zinoviev Letter entitled one chapter with a typically incriminating phrase, "The Tories Enter the Conspiracy." These allegations are unfounded. At present all evidence indicates that the Tories had been led to believe that the Labour government was withholding an authentic document for political reasons. The Tory offer of £ 7,500 to im Thurn's informer certainly underscored their intention to use the letter for partisan purposes, but it did not mean they conspired to perpetrate a fraud. A junior member of the Tory Central Office in the 1920's concurs, "As far as I am aware there was no actual 'collusion.'"[30]

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[30]Letter from Percy Cohen, London, Sept. 19, 1969.

APPENDIX II

TORY POLITICIANS VISIT RUSSIA

During the 1920's an increasing number of Britons journeyed to Russia to see how the Bolshevik "experiment" was working. Tories and Labourites disagreed on the merits of these trips. The controversy centered on the visitors' objectivity. Despite pretensions to openmindedness, all visitors to Russia came with their own prior estimates of Bolshevism. As one Briton remarked, "One of the most striking things about the trip . . . was the way in which people who had been to exactly the same places and seen exactly the same things had diametrically opposite impressions of those things."[1]

The Labour party or its affiliates sponsored a number of widely publicized trips. Most Tories believed these pilgrimages were useless. The report of the first Labour delegation to Russia, published in the summer of 1920, contained mixed praise and condemnation. But the Daily Mail and The Times denounced the delegates as Bolshevik dupes.[2] The Conservative Central Office took

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[1] Archibald Lyall, Russian Roundabout: a Non-Political Pilgrimage (London, 1933), p. 183.

[2] Daily Mail, June 11, 1920, p. 4; The Times, June 6, 1920, p. 11.

quotations from the report out of context for use against Labour candidates; The Times opened its columns to those delegates who disliked Russia.[3]

In February, 1925 a favorable report on Russia by a TUC delegation met with the usual critical response from most Tory papers.[4] J. L. Garvin disagreed: "It may help by its example of reasonable tone to abate the ravings of those belated fanatics on the opposite side who suffer seriously from Bolshevism on the brain."[5] Robert Horne said the report contradicted what he had read by "independent observers." In a typical diatribe Birkenhead accused the delegates of transmitting the "poisonous doctrines of Moscow" to produce anarchy and despair at home.[6]

Despite these condemnations few Conservative politicians journeyed to Russia to correct Labour's allegedly distorted portrait.[7] The Soviet government did not

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[3] Bolshevism as Labour Saw It (London, 1920), pamphlet no. 1995; The Times, Sept. 20, p. 11, Sept. 30, 1920, p. 11. For an objective analysis of the report, see Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 214-17.

[4] Morning Post, Feb. 28, 1925, p. 13; Daily Mail, Feb. 28, 1925, p. 6; The Times, Feb. 28, 1925, p. 13; Spectator, CXXXIV (March 7, 1925), 353.

[5] Observer, March 1, 1925, p. 12.

[6] The Times, March 25, p. 16, June 29, 1925, p. 9.

[7] A few Tory partisans visited Russia occasionally during the 1920's. Mrs. Cecil Hanbury painted a grim picture of everyday life. She told a meeting of the Anti-Socialist

discourage potential bourgeois visitors.[8] The reason perhaps can be found in Conservative press estimates of Labour visits. The press argued that it was impossible to discover the "truth" during a few weeks' rushed tour. Soviet authorities allegedly hindered inquisitive visitors, especially by allowing them to see only certain things. The language problem, too, prevented the curious from ascertaining the opinions of ordinary Russians.[9] In fact, some Tories stayed away from Russia deliberately, apparently feeling that distance promoted objectivity, not ignorance as Labourites charged. Many probably would have agreed with a Tory publisher, Ernest Benn, who wrote that "by refusing to visit Russia, far from disqualifying myself as an authority on the subject, I have fitted myself more specially as a fair judge."[10]

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and Anti-Communist Union that she had seen bands of homeless orphans roaming the streets, starving workers, drunken peasants, and prisons filled to capacity; see The Times, Dec. 11, 1925, p. 13. A. T. Cook was appalled by what the Soviet "bloodsuckers" had done; see Ibid., Oct. 9, 1926, p. 7. However, T. H. Ailken and Celia Simpson recorded favorable impressions of conditions in Moscow; see Spectator, CXXXV (Dec. 26, 1925), 1176, CXL (June 30, 1928), 960. H. Smallwood visited Russia four times during the decade, departing each time with a mixed reaction; see Ashridge Journal, no. 3 (August, 1930), 46-51.

[8]This is made quite clear by Sylvia Margulies, The Pilgrimage to Russia: the Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1925-1937 (Madison, Wis., 1968), passim.

[9]See especially Saturday Review, CXXXVIII (Dec. 27, 1924), 647-48, and Spectator, CXXXIV (March 7, 1925), 353-54.

[10]Ernest Benn, About Russia (London, 1930), p. 7.

Backbencher Martin Conway apparently was the first Tory politician to see Russia in the 1920's. A noted art expert, he spent six weeks touring the country in the summer of 1924 to determine if the Bolsheviks had destroyed or sold innumerable art treasures, as was reported frequently in Conservative and Russian émigré papers. Upon returning he stated that the treasures were intact and praised the Soviets for their efforts to preserve them.[11] A short time later Colonel Assheton Pownall, M.P., spent a week each in Moscow and Leningrad and issued a bleak description of conditions under "this most appalling tyranny." He addressed a number of Tory audiences, and the Conservative Central Office reprinted one of his speeches.[12] In July, 1925 Lord Newton, a prominent anti-Soviet peer, stayed in Leningrad for several weeks. His few remarks indicated displeasure, if not disgust, with what he had seen.[13]

In April, 1926 four backbenchers undertook the most widely publicized journey to Russia by a Tory group during

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[11] Soviet Union Review, VI (Jan. 17, 1925), 59-60; The Times, June 24, 1924, p. 14. Conway was an anti-Bolshevik; see Western Mail, May 25, 1927, p. 9. The Soviet Union Review was the successor to Russian Information and Review.

[12] The Times, Sept. 25, p. 7, Oct. 11, p. 11, Nov. 19, 1924, p. 11. Assheton Pownall, The Plain Truth About Russia Today (London, 1924), pamphlet no. 2497.

[13] E.g., Spectator, CXXXVI (Jan. 2, 1926), 13.

the decade. The idea originated with Sir Frank Nelson on March 5, 1926 as he listened to Labourite Fred Bromley during a Commons debate on foreign trade. Nelson realized that no Conservative could say, as Bromley had, that he had gone to Russia recently to study developments there which affected trade with Britain.[14]

Nelson quickly recruited three other Tory M.P.'s to accompany him, Robert Boothby, Robert Bourne, and Thomas Moore. All of them were interested in Russia. A prominent exchange broker, Nelson had described Bolshevism as a "blood-thirsty" evil and in his maiden speech had seconded a motion protesting Communist propaganda.[15] Moore had become a staunch anti-Bolshevik after seeing Soviet excesses during his two years with Allied armies in South Russia. His fluency in Russian was particularly valuable. However, he was associated with a firm which marketed Soviet oil in England; he explained that he wanted to help reduce unemployment by increasing Russian trade.[16] Bourne had

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[14]For Bromley's speech, see Debates, CXCII (March 5, 1926), cols. 1140-44. For Nelson's later explanations, see Morning Post, April 17, 1926, p. 14.

[15]The Times, Sept. 15, 1924, p. 14; Debates, CLXXXI (March 3, 1925), cols. 359-65. Short biographical sketches of the four M.P.'s can be found in Dod's Parliamentary Companion for the Year 1926 (London, 1926).

[16]Moore's anti-Soviet views can be found in The Times, Aug. 10, 1926, p. 17, May 9, 1927, p. 12.

argued that Russia's exclusion from European affairs was damaging the peace.[17] In May, 1925 Boothby had intended to visit Russia to lobby for the herring industry, but for some reason the trip never was made.[18]

Under-Secretary Godfrey Locker-Lampson told Nelson that British diplomatic agents in Russia would offer assistance. An interview was arranged between the M.P.'s and the Northern Department of the Foreign Office.[19] After spending several more weeks securing Soviet approval and arranging their itinerary, the group prepared to leave London on April 17.

Shortly before departing they spelled out the objectives of their proposed five-week trip. Moore hoped that "our visit may result in a better relationship between Russia and this country because . . . Russia has far more to gain by cultivating relations with Britain than with any other country."[20] Echoing the same sentiments, Boothby

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[17]For Bourne's speech, see Debates, CLXXXI (March 5, 1925), cols. 772-74.

[18]Boothby to Chamberlain, May 1, 1925, Chamberlain to Boothby, May 5, 1925, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 52/107, AC 52/108.

[19]Nelson to Chamberlain, March 12, March 15, 1926, Godfrey Locker-Lampson to Nelson, March 15, 1926, Chamberlain to Nelson, March 17, 1926, FO 371/11788.

[20]Financial News, April 19, 1926, cited by Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 226-27.

stressed:

> We are quite independent and we are going with an absolutely open mind and we should not have gone unless we had real assurances from the authorities in Moscow that not only should we be given every facility for making a thorough investigation of the social, political and economic problems but that they would be very glad to see us.[21]

With one exception, the Conservative press did not comment editorially. Some papers may have feared the M.P.'s would be as objective as they professed to be. The Observer hoped the visit would improve Anglo-Russian relations.[22] But "rightist" backbencher Alfred Knox asked Chamberlain if it was "in any sense an official delegation." His disclaimer apparently satisfied apprehensive Tory zealots.[23] The Soviets welcomed the visit, the Soviet Union Monthly noting that "nothing can be more welcome than an impartial inquiry and an unbiassed report by members of the Conservative Party."[24]

On April 24 the group arrived in Moscow where they were fully occupied for the next eleven days. They were received cordially at the Kremlin, interviewing Litvinov, Radek, and other Soviet notables. The M.P.'s talked

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[21] Observer, April 18, 1926, p. 8; Morning Post, April 17, 1926, p. 14.

[22] Observer, April 18, 1926, p. 15.

[23] Debates, CXCIV (April 21, 1926), col. 1184.

[24] Soviet Union Monthly, I (May, 1926), 75.

at length with Soviet bureaucrats who discussed all aspects of Anglo-Russian relations with apparent candor. For several days they inspected factories, workers' clubs, schools, and public health facilities. With Moore serving as interpreter, they spoke to workers, peasants,and soldiers.

After just five days in Moscow Nelson believed he had discovered the crux of Anglo-Soviet difficulties. In an interview published in Izvestia on April 29, he reasoned that increased contacts would reduce each country's "profound" ignorance of the other. He tried to alleviate Soviet fears by pleading that the Conservative government was not trying to overthrow them. Pravda retorted that Nelson must not have been a party to Chamberlain's endless plots.[25]

On April 29 Bourne became ill and went to Berlin for treatment. The British general strike began on May 1. Three days later reports reaching Moscow convinced the three remaining M.P.'s to return home. Their planned trips to Leningrad, the Saratov grain districts, and the Baku oil fields were cancelled. They left Moscow on May 5, barely halfway through their journey.

After arriving in Berlin on May 7, they were reunited with Bourne who had since recovered. For the next two days they remained in Berlin to draw up a report of their

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[25]Hodgson to Chamberlain, May 8, 1926, FO 371/11788.

impressions. Running to nearly thirty typewritten pages, the draft contained an admixture of perceptive judgments and naive impressions which in some ways resembled earlier Labour delegations' reports. The most salient points merit full discussion.[26]

In the introduction the M.P.'s stated that their recommendations would not have differed even if they had completed their itinerary. They were able to go wherever they desired without Soviet interference.[27] In discussing politics they emphasized the revolutionary nature of the Soviet government. Because of Marxism, the inevitable changes in Soviet policy would be "cautious and slow."[28] Although Lenin's death had created a power vacuum, the fall of the Soviet government was "highly improbable" and "undesirable" because complete chaos would result.[29] The report noted that the administrative ability of Soviet commissars "will stand favorable comparison with any other Government of modern times."[30]

The visitors saw a "considerable measure of

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[26]The report was appended to a minute by Locker-Lampson, May 11, 1926, FO 371/11798. (Hereinafter referred to as draft report.)

[27]Draft report, pp. 1-2.

[28]Ibid., p. 3.

[29]Ibid., p. 4.

[30]Ibid., p. 5.

democracy" in legislative and administrative affairs, but they were disconcerted by two practices: non-Communists did not receive legal justice, and the activities of the State Political Administration (GPU) were unjustified in view of domestic tranquility. However, the GPU's methods "are by no means approved in some of the most authoritative quarters."[31]

Although the Red Army was in excellent condition, it did not threaten the West.[32] The NEP was well-suited to Russia. In the financial sector the government was far from being bankrupt, as was often reported in England. In fact, the Soviets were pursuing an austere fiscal policy. The noticeable currency depreciation would be alleviated by greater foreign currency reserves coming from an inevitable upsurge in Russian exports.[33] On the whole the delegation felt the government was changing slowly from a tyranny to a democracy. Toleration given all forms of religion exemplified this trend.[34]

Regarding social conditions, the M.P.'s believed the Russian people had benefited from the Revolution, "not in freedom either of expression or action, but to a very amazing extent in education, culture, and social amenities."[35] Only

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[31] Ibid., pp. 5-7.

[32] Ibid., pp. 25-27.

[33] Ibid., pp. 7, 11-14.

[34] Ibid., p. 7.

[35] Ibid., pp. 8, 9, 11.

the Tsarist survivors reaped a "very bitter reward."[36] Trade unions were necessary because workers were "prone to mistake what is good either for themselves or the State."[37] Only a top-heavy bureaucracy prevented the educational system from realizing its full potential. Of Soviet achievements in public health, sanitation, and artistic and cultural development, "it is difficult to speak too highly."[38]

In view of the prevailing Tory fear of Soviet propaganda, the most startling observations dealt with the Third International. The visitors saw a separation between the Third International and the Soviet government, comparable to that between the Second International and the late Labour government. As proof they noted that only one Soviet minister was on the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Believing that Comintern propaganda had shifted recently to the defensive, they stated, "We are not disposed to invest the activities of the Third International with one tenth of the importance attached to them." In fact, since 1922 "the idea of a world revolution has been practically abandoned in Russian communistic circles and the conception of a single

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[36] Ibid., p. 10.

[37] Ibid., pp. 18-21.

[38] Ibid., pp. 21-24.

Socialist state accepted."[39]

Interspersed throughout the text were a number of oblique references warning that Britain would make a serious mistake by not settling with the "new" Russia. These intimations became bold proposals in the conclusions and recommendations. As the embodiment of the report's optimistic tone, they should be summarized in full.[40]

Conclusions

1. The Soviet experiment is becoming successful.
2. The Soviet government is here to stay.
3. It is the best form of administration for Russia.
4. It is opportune for Britain to establish closer political and commercial ties with Russia.
5. The main obstacles to an accord are each country's ignorance of the other, and especially the emotional speeches and articles by "well-known public men" and "ill-informed" newspapers in Britain.

Recommendations

1. The Export Credits Scheme should be extended to Russia.
2. Britain should resume negotiations to settle all outstanding problems.
3. Britain should consider extending a government-guaranteed loan, and prewar debts should be settled in a purely businesslike fashion.
4. Britain should promote more accurate knowledge of Russia and should discourage inaccurate speeches and press reports which only serve to heighten Soviet conviction of an anti-Soviet policy in Britain.

In a final paragraph the report stated that the adoption of

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[39] Ibid., p. 17.

[40] Ibid., pp. 27-30.

the recommendations "will have an early and happy effect both on the peace and stability of Europe, and the prosperity and happiness of our own people.[41]

This was a bold and daring report by Tory politicians. In fact, it could have passed as a work of Communist fellow travelers. A loan to Russia was anathema in most Conservative circles. The statements on the Third International would have outraged most of their colleagues. Few Tories would have agreed that the Soviets had abandoned revolution. The oblique references to anti-Soviet diatribes by such party notables as Birkenhead, Churchill, and Joynson-Hicks were made at considerable risk, because the four men had just begun their political careers.

Their rosy description of the Soviet economy was too simplistic. Also it is difficult to explain their facile acceptance of the fictional distinction between the Soviet government and the Comintern. Most important, their recommendations contained no new suggestions on settling such outstanding problems as private debts. As the Labour party had discovered in 1924, something more than good intentions were needed to resolve the Anglo-Soviet impasse.

An intriguing, though insoluble, question concerns the writers' objectivity. Despite their strenuous assertions

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[41]Although Bourne endorsed the spirit of the recommendations, he felt unable to sign the report.

to the contrary, it seems possible that they, like other visitors, looked at Russia through rose-colored glasses. Because of their well-known desire to affect a detente with Russia, they perhaps went there only to bolster their convictions. They certainly weakened their credibility by asserting that nothing to be seen outside Moscow could alter their impressions.

On May 9 separate copies of the draft intended for publication were sent from Berlin to Baldwin, Chamberlain, and Godfrey Locker-Lampson, apparently as a gesture of courtesy for their assistance. The M.P.'s then returned to London. Unknown to them, the report had provoked a whirlwind of government activity bordering on panic.

Baldwin's secretary asked them not to publish the report until the Prime Minister had studied it.[42] Locker-Lampson's initial comment suggested the coming reaction, "A fortnight's tour is a very short time in which to acquire a grasp of so complicated a situation."[43] Sensing the repercussions to the government's Russian policy, Locker-Lampson met with Chamberlain on May 12. To avoid any charge of pressuring the delegation, the Foreign Secretary refused

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[42]Patrick Gower to Nelson, May 14, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 113, p. 42. A copy of the draft report is in the Baldwin Papers.

[43]Minute by Locker-Lampson, May 11, 1926, FO 371/11798.

to see them. Instead he felt that F. S. Jackson, Chairman of the Conservative party, should "interview" them. Jackson went quickly to the Foreign Office with Commander Bolton Eyres-Monsell, the Chief Tory Whip. When informed of the report, Jackson feared that the Labour party would make full use of it. They suggested that Chamberlain should see the M.P.'s.[44]

The next morning, May 13, Locker-Lampson showed the report to Sir William Tyrrell, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, who thought Baldwin should force the M.P.'s to withhold it. After meeting with Eyres-Monsell and other Conservative Whips, Locker-Lampson decided that the Prime Minister was too occupied with the domestic crisis. Chamberlain then agreed to meet with the M.P.'s that same afternoon.[45]

Nelson was not in London, but the other three attended. Chamberlain made it clear that he was speaking as the Prime Minister's deputy, and not as Foreign Secretary. Stressing the tenseness caused by the general strike, he reasoned that publication of the report "might add possibly to their [the government's] trouble." Any division of opinion within the ruling party on an important issue might

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[44]Memorandum by Locker-Lampson, May 17, 1926, Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

be used by revolutionary forces. Besides, in several instances the report was incorrect. He asked that they postpone publication at least until the domestic crisis subsided, and that they publish nothing without Foreign Office approval. In response Robert Bourne noted that he disagreed with much of the report signed by his colleagues, but Moore and Boothby staunchly defended its contents. One of them--probably Boothby--stated that he would leave the party rather than repudiate the report. But not wanting to embarrass the government, they agreed to acquiesce with Chamberlain if Nelson concurred.[46] On May 17 Chamberlain met again with Nelson, Moore, and Boothby. Nelson announced a "drastic" revision, and the Foreign Secretary approved publication.[47]

In contrast to the original, the revised report was weak, apologetic, and almost totally lacking in bold recommendations and conclusions.[48] Though still claiming impartiality, they now admitted, "A fortnight in Moscow can in no sense be considered sufficient foundation upon which to base dogmatic opinions."[49] Previously optimistic

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Minute by Locker-Lampson, May 18, 1926, FO 371/11798.

[48] The revised report was attached to a minute by Locker-Lampson, May 18, 1926, Ibid. (Hereinafter referred to as revised report.)

[49] Revised report, p. 1.

descriptions of Russian politics and social conditions were diluted. Instead of evolving toward democracy, the government was "an autocracy pure and simple." All internal successes were attributed to an efficient dictatorship, not to any beneficial results of Communism. Instead of the judiciary improving on its own initiative, it would now do so only if the government consented. The sentence about religious tolerance was expanded to include examples of blasphemies which "filled us with abhorrence."[50] The distinction between the Comintern and the Soviet government was blurred, and Bolshevik propaganda no longer was labeled harmless.[51]

The conclusions were eliminated: instead, Britain was asked not to forego any favorable opportunity to settle with Russia. In place of the recommendations, Britain was urged to stop anti-Bolshevik propaganda and to obtain a settlement of private debts on terms favoring Britons. However, the revision asked for increased Anglo-Soviet trade for the sake of the unemployed.[52]

Even these drastic changes did not satisfy the Foreign Office. Locker-Lampson felt the report still contained certain "inopportune" sentences "which might be

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[50] Ibid., pp. 2, 4, 6.

[51] Ibid., p. 15.

[52] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

misused by ill-intentioned persons."[53] He then bracketed the objectionable sections, mostly implied or polite criticisms of Britain's policy of aloofness toward Russia. Other suggested eliminations dealt with the report's advocacy of long-term trade credits for Russia, the two Powers' ignorance of each other, the revised estimate of the relationship between the Comintern and the Soviet government, and the Soviets' allegedly peaceful intentions.[54] Nelson agreed to every deletion without objection.[55] Baldwin approved the emasculated version the next day.[56] Both Locker-Lampson and Chamberlain expressed satisfaction. The Foreign Secretary instructed his Under-Secretary to thank the group "for the friendly way in which they received and treated my friendly suggestions."[57]

Why did the M.P.'s revise their draft so hastily? Lord Boothby provides a possible answer when he recalls that they were impressed by Chamberlain's fears of intensified domestic unrest. But more important, they did so upon realizing the extent of Foreign Office opposition. The

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[53]Minute by Locker-Lampson, May 18, 1926, FO 371/11798.

[54]Revised report, pp. 10, 14-15. Locker-Lampson's deletions were penciled into the Foreign Office copy of the revised report.

[55]Minute by Locker-Lampson, May 18, 1926, FO 371/11798.

[56]Locker-Lampson to Tyrrell, May 19, 1926, FO 800/227.

[57]Minute by Locker-Lampson, May 18, 1926, FO 371/11798.

M.P.'s did not want to incur their enmity because any future activities would require Foreign Office approval or, at least, neutrality.[58] The M.P.'s were not overjoyed. Boothby's desire to terminate "this accursed thing" suggested frustration.[59]

Chamberlain's avowed reasons for interfering were valid. However, F. S. Jackson's reference to Labour usage of the draft report was perhaps another factor. Locker-Lampson's deletions add weight to this speculation; several of these hardly could have jeopardized national interests, e.g., "For the diplomatic relations between the two countries leaves, in our opinion, a great deal to be desired."[60] Tories had been saying that for years. Chamberlain also might have feared that publication of the draft would have undermined his policy of keeping the Soviets at arm's length. Any sign of growing opposition from within his own party would have reinforced the Soviets' belief that Britain eventually would modify her terms for a settlement. The aftermath of the general strike and the continuing coal strike clouded what otherwise would have been a clear case of governmental political pressure. That partisan politics played at least some role seems certain.

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[58]Lord Robert Boothby, interview in London, July 29, 1969.

[59]Boothby to Geoffrey Fry (Baldwin's private secretary), May 20, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 113, p. 44.

[60]Revised report, p. 16.

Chamberlain tried to undercut anticipated Opposition criticism of his role in the affair. The M.P.'s promised to say that the government had not forced them to change or omit anything from the report.[61] Chamberlain also told Arthur Willert, Publicity Director at the Foreign Office, what to say to press reporters. If asked whether or not Chamberlain had urged the M.P.'s to alter the report, Willert was to respond:

> How can I say? I was not present at the interview; but, if you ask me what I think, I expect that the Secretary of State discussed it with them and I should not be surprised if they themselves felt that in the light of that discussion some passages in the report needed reconsideration.[62]

The report was printed privately and circulated at the end of May. Boothby predicted correctly that even the revision would be received coldly by many Tories.[63] The virulent anti-Soviet press ignored it completely. Several Tory zealots criticized the moderate assessment of conditions in Russia.[64] The Daily Telegraph conceded that the observations were sound but felt that nothing would happen until

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[61] Minute by Locker-Lampson, May 18, 1926, FO 371/11798.

[62] Minute by Chamberlain, May 20, 1926, Ibid.

[63] Boothby to Fry, May 20, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 113, p. 44,

[64] For the remarks of Oliver Locker-Lampson and Alfred Knox, see Debates, CXCVII (June 25, 1926), cols. 707, 715. See also Knox's detailed rejoinder in the National Review, LXXXVII (August, 1926), 857-66.

Moscow changed. The Saturday Review labeled the recommendations as weak and differing little from previously unsuccessful policies. Only the Spectator offered unstinted praise, "It is absurd not to trade with a man because you do not like him personally."[65] The Foreign Office realized that the business community would not be impressed.[66]

The Liberal Manchester Guardian welcomed the report. The Labour Daily Herald refused to publish it, allegedly because the M.P.'s had asked for money.[67] However, Labour party leaders commented favorably.[68] Izvestia hoped that "the more sober elements" in the Tory government would implement the report's suggestions.[69]

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[65] Daily Telegraph, June 14, 1926, p. 8; Saturday Review, CXLI (June 5, 1926), 669-70; Spectator, CXXXVI (June 5, 1926), 937.

[66] Minute by Gascoigne, June 12, 1926, FO 371/11788.

[67] Minute by Gregory, June 1, 1926, Ibid. The M.P.'s met all expenses out of their own pockets. Nelson was especially piqued by intimations that they had been guests of the Soviet government. Since publication expenses also fell on their shoulders, apparently few copies were printed; Nelson provided the Foreign Office with just three. The Central News Service, which publicized it, did send a check to them; see Nelson to Sir Geoffrey Butler (parliamentary private secretary to Sir Samuel Hoare), June 9, 1926, FO 371/11798. The articles written later by the M.P.'s (and referred to below) probably helped defray the expenses.

[68] For the comments of Ponsonby and MacDonald, see Debates, CXCVII (June 26, 1926), cols. 715, 763-64.

[69] Izvestia, June 4, 1926, cited by Hodgson in a dispatch to Chamberlain, June 12, 1926, FO 371/11788.

The report might have received a warmer reception from Conservatives had it not coincided with the general strike. Soviet financial contributions to the strikers resulted in a rising tide of anti-Soviet hostility within the party.[70] At the time Chamberlain was hard pressed to secure Cabinet approval just for continuing relations.

The M.P.'s defended their views. Nelson told Commons that

> if three members of a large political party with some desire to see something of a problem for themselves are met on their return with criticism, not all of it ill-natured, but some of it very ill-natured, it is not best calculated to induce other people to undertake similar pilgrimages which after all, when all this heat has died down, may prove to be in the best interests of any large political party.[71]

The group also addressed the Tory backbenchers' 1922 Committee.[72] Several took up their pens. In a three-part series in the Daily Telegraph, Thomas Moore assessed Russian conditions more favorably than the published report, but he stopped short of the original conclusions and recommendations. He wrote that growing Russian nationalism would lead to a

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[70]The Soviets claimed this campaign of invective was a direct response to the report, which they mistakenly believed had been given wide coverage in Britain; see Soviet Union Monthly, I (July, 1926), 124.

[71]Debates, CXCVII (June 26, 1926), col. 752.

[72]Lord Robert Boothby, interview in London, July 29, 1969.

democratic government. Britain should reopen negotiations soon because the Soviets desired friendship.[73] In the Spectator Boothby echoed Moore's sentiments but more forcefully called on the government to provide better trade facilities. Greater commercial contacts would help to dispel mutual ignorance.[74]

Writing appropriately in the anti-Soviet English Review, Robert Bourne explained his disagreement with the draft report. He felt that the NEP was a failure because state-run enterprises were operating at a loss. Combined with peasant distrust of paper currency, this meant that Russia lacked sufficient funds to provide adequate security for a foreign loan. Without entrepreneurs or a loan Russia could never fulfill her enormous potential. Because of the British public reaction to Soviet funds for the miners, Bourne concluded that a rapprochement had been delayed "indefinitely."[75] Significantly, Nelson, Moore, and Boothby arrived at the same conclusion. They believed the Russian miners' "voluntary" contributions were really compulsory

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[73]Daily Telegraph, June 4, p. 10, June 5, p. 12, June 7, 1926, p. 10.

[74]Spectator, CXXXVII (July 3, 1926), 5-6, (July 10, 1926), 42-43, (July 17, 1926), 83-84. Boothby reprinted extracts from his articles in his autobiography, I Fight to Live (London, 1947), pp. 74-86.

[75]English Review, XLIII (July, 1926), 38-44.

levies.[76]

Bourne apparently lost interest in Russia for he never again spoke on the subject in Commons. Nelson opposed a break in June, 1926 but apparently remained silent thereafter. Moore occasionally wrote in favor of closer relations.[77] During the debate on the diplomatic rupture in May, 1927, he was the only Tory to ask for retention of the Trade Agreement. Boothby was quiet for a time after becoming Churchill's parliamentary private secretary in the summer of 1926. Early in 1927 he advocated a break with Russia but then favored a renewal after the Arcos raid.

The visit apparently had no positive effect on Anglo-Soviet relations.[78] It may have had a negative impact: only one Tory politician again visited Russia until after the May, 1929 election. An incident barely one month after the M.P.'s visit indicated that the Tory government discouraged such trips. Lord Inverforth, a noted industrialist, requested Baldwin's permission to travel to

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[76]Minute by Butler, June 10, FO 371/11786.

[77]See The Times, Aug. 10, 1926, p. 17, and Morning Post, July 29, 1926, clipping in FO 371/11798.

[78]Only the American and the Latvian governments requested copies of the report. In both instances the Foreign Office underscored Chamberlain's insistence that the report did not have his approval or disapproval; see memorandum by the Overseas Trade Department, July 12, 1926, and Latvian Minister to Chamberlain, Oct. 8, 1926, FO 371/11798.

Moscow for trade discussions. The visit, he stressed, would not touch on politics. In a typically laconic reply, Baldwin seemed annoyed, "It is impossible to pay a non-political visit to Moscow."[79] Inverforth made the trip, but he travelled under an assumed name and it was never made public.[80] A number of Tory backbenchers, however, did journey to Russia after Baldwin left office.[81]

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[79]Minute by Baldwin, June 12, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, p. 127. See also Sir George Armstrong (British journalist) to Eyres-Monsell, June 9, 1926, Baldwin Papers, vol. 115, p. 127.

[80]Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, II, 482. Lord Beaverbrook paid a short visit to Moscow in the spring of 1928, but according to one historian he spent most of his time in a hotel room reading his Daily Express; A. J. P. Taylor, interview in London, July 7, 1969. See also Kenneth Young, Churchill and Beaverbrook, pp. 101-2.

[81]John de Vere Loder, defeated in the May, 1929 election, visited Russia in the autumn of 1929 and again in 1930; see his Bolshevism in Perspective, pp. 95- 164. Lady Astor accompanied George Bernard Shaw on his tour in September, 1931; see Maurice Collis, Nancy Astor (New York, 1960), pp. 160-74. In September, 1932 a party of four back-benchers went there, and in the same month Harold Macmillan also made the trip; see his Winds of Change, 1914-1939 (New York, 1966), pp. 295-325. Captain Cunningham-Reid paid a visit in the summer of 1933; see R. J. Ellis, He Walks Alone: the Public and Private Life of Captain Cunningham-Reid (London, 1945), pp. 95-96. Boothby returned in the spring of 1934 but was much more critical of the Soviets than he had been earlier; see his I Fight to Live, pp. 86-87.

A P P E N D I X I I I

GUIDE TO MAJOR CONSERVATIVES IN THE TEXT*

AMERY, Leopold: M.P.; Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1919-21; Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1921-22; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1922-24; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1924-29. "Centrist."

ARCHER-SHEE, Martin: M.P., -1923. "Rightist."

ASHLEY, Wilfred: M.P.; Parliamentary private secretary to the Minister of Transport, 1922-23; Under-Secretary of State for War, 1923-24; Minister of Transport, 1924-29. "Rightist."

BALDWIN, Stanley: M.P.; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1917-21; President of the Board of Trade, 1921-22; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1922-23; Prime Minister, 1923-24, 1924-29; Leader of the Conservative Party, 1923-. "Centrist."

BALFOUR, Arthur James Balfour, First Earl: M.P., -1922; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, -1919; Lord President of the Council, 1919-22, 1925-29. "Centrist."

BIRKENHEAD, Frederick Edwin Smith, First Earl: M.P., -1922; Attorney General, -1919; Lord Chancellor, 1919-22; Secretary of State for India, 1924-28. "Rightist" after the Coalition era.

BOOTHBY, Robert: M.P., 1924-; Parliamentary private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1926-29. Leading "conciliator."

BOURNE, Robert: M.P., 1924-. "Conciliator."

BUCHANAN, George: Ambassador to Russia, -1918; Ambassador to Italy, 1919-21. Initially a "conciliator," he became a "rightist" in 1919.

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*This list includes only the names and important offices held by these individuals between 1917 and 1929. Unless otherwise indicated, the M.P.'s in the list served throughout this period.

BULL, William: M.P. "Rightist," but remained a personal friend of Leonid Krassin.

CAVE, George Cave, First Viscount: M.P., -1918; Home Secretary, -1919; Lord Chancellor, 1922-24, 1924-28. "Rightist."

CAVENDISH-BENTINCK, Lord Henry: M.P., -1929. Articulate "conciliator" in immediate postwar years.

CECIL of Chelwood, Edgar Algernon Robert Cecil, First Viscount: M.P., -1923; Minister of Blockade, -1918; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, -1918; Lord Privy Seal, 1923-24; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1924-27. Early "conciliator," later a "centrist."

CHAMBERLAIN, Austen: M.P.; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1919-21; Lord Privy Seal, 1921-22; Leader of the Conservative party, 1921-22; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1924-29. "Centrist."

CHAMBERLAIN, Neville: M.P., 1918-; Postmaster General, 1922-23; Minister of Health, 1923, 1924-29; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1923-24. "Rightist."

CHURCHILL, Winston: M.P., -1922, 1924-; Secretary of State for War, 1919-21; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1921-22; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924-29. "Rightist."

COOPER, A. Duff: M.P., 1924-29; Financial Secretary to the War Office, 1928-29. "Conciliator."

CROFT, Henry Page: M.P. Leading "ultra."

CUNLIFFE-LISTER, Philip (Lloyd-Greame): M.P., 1918-; Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, 1920-21; Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department, 1921-22; President of the Board of Trade, 1922-24, 1924-29. "Centrist."

CURZON of Kedleston, George Nathaniel Curzon, First Marquess: Lord President of the Council, -1919; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1919-24; Lord President of the Council, 1924-25. "Rightist."

DAVIDSON, J. C. C.: M.P., 1920-23, 1924-; Parliamentary private secretary to Bonar Law, 1922-23; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1923-24; Chairman of the Conservative party, 1927-30.

DAVIDSON, J. H.: M.P., 1918-. "Rightist."

ELLIOT, Walter: M.P., 1918-23, 1924-; Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, 1926-29. "Rightist."

GARVIN, J. L.: Editor of the Observer. Leading "conciliator."

GOFF, Park: M.P., 1918-23, 1924-29; Parliamentary private secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty, 1919. "Ultra."

GRENFELL, E. C.: M.P., 1922-. "Rightist."

GRETTON, John: M.P. Leading "ultra."

GUINNESS, Walter: M.P., Under-Secretary of State for War, 1922-23; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1923-24, 1924-25; Minister of Agriculture, 1925-29. "Rightist."

GWYNNE, H. A.: Editor of the Morning Post. "Ultra."

HAILSHAM, Douglas Hogg, First Viscount: M.P., 1922-28; Attorney General, 1922-24, 1924-28; Lord Chancellor, 1928-29. "Rightist."

HANNON, P. J.: M.P., 1921-; Secretary of the Industrial Group in Commons, 1921-29. "Conciliator."

HARRISON, Austen: Editor of the English Review, -1923. "Centrist."

HOARE, Samuel: M.P.; Secretary of State for Air, 1922-24, 1924-29. Changed from a "rightist" to a "centrist" in early 1920's.

HORNE, Robert: M.P., 1918-; Minister of Labour, 1919; President of the Board of Trade, 1920-21; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1921-22. "Centrist" until mid-1920's.

IRWIN, Edward Wood, First Baron: M.P., -1925; Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1921-22; President of the Board of Education, 1922-24; Minister of Agriculture, 1924-25; Viceroy of India, 1926-. "Centrist," not a "rightist" as is sometimes claimed.

JACKSON, F. S.: M.P., -1926; Financial Secretary to the War Office, 1922-23; Chairman of the Conservative party, 1923-26.

JOYNSON-HICKS, William: M.P.; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1923; Minister of Health, 1923-24; Home Secretary, 1924-29. "Rightist."

KINDERSLEY, Guy: M.P., 1923-. "Rightist," involved with the Zinoviev letter case.

KNOX, Alfred: M.P., 1924-. "Rightist," served in Siberia during interventionist period.

LANSDOWNE, Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, Fifth Marquess of: Tory elder statesman, an early "centrist."

LAW, Andrew Bonar: M.P., -1923; Chancellor of the Exchequer, -1918; Lord Privy Seal, 1919-21; Prime Minister, 1922-23; Leader of the Conservative party, -1921, 1922-23. Apparently was a "centrist."

LOCKER-LAMPSON, Godfrey: M.P., Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office, 1923-24, 1924-25; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1925-29. "Centrist."

LOCKER-LAMPSON, Oliver: M.P., 1918-; Parliamentary private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1919-21; Parliamentary private secretary to the Lord Privy Seal, 1921-22. An outspoken and active "rightist," leader of a British armored car squadron in Russia during the war.

LONG of Wraxall, Walter Long, First Viscount: M.P., -1921; Secretary of State for the Colonies, -1918; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1919-21. "Ultra."

MACKINDER, Halford: M.P., -1922. "Rightist."

MACMILLAN, Harold: M.P., 1924-29. "Conciliator."

MCNEILL, Ronald: M.P.; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1922-24, 1924-25; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1925-27; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1927-29. "Rightist."

MARLOWE, Thomas: Editor of the Daily Mail, -1926. "Rightist."

MAXSE, L. J.: Editor of the National Review. "Ultra."

MILNER, Alfred Milner, First Viscount: Minister without Portfolio, -1918; Secretary of State for War, 1918-19; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1919-21. Leading "rightist" in the immediate postwar period.

MOORE, Thomas: M.P., 1925-. "Conciliator."

NELSON, Frank: M.P., 1924-. "Conciliator."

NORTHUMBERLAND, Alan Ian Percy, Eighth Duke of: "Ultra" polemicist.

ORMSBY-GORE, William: M.P.; Parliamentary private secretary to the Minister without Portfolio, -1918; Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1922-24, 1924-29. "Rightist."

PERCY, Lord Eustace: M.P., 1921-; Parliamentary private secretary to the President of the Board of Education, 1923; Minister of Health, 1923-24; President of the Board of Education, 1924-29. "Centrist."

REES, J. D.: M.P., -1922. Alternated between "rightist" and "centrist" viewpoints.

RICHARDSON, Philip: M.P., 1922-. "Rightist."

SALISBURY, James Edward Gascoyne-Cecil, Fourth Marquess of: Lord President of the Council, 1922-24; Lord Privy Seal, 1924-29. "Rightist."

SAMUEL, A. M.: M.P., 1918-; Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department, 1924-27. "Rightist."

SMITH, Allan: M.P., 1919-23. "Conciliator."

STANLEY, Oliver: M.P., 1924-. "Conciliator."

STEEL-MAITLAND, Arthur: M.P.; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1917-19; Minister of Labour, 1924-29. "Centrist."

STRACHEY, John St. Loe: Editor of the Spectator, -1925. "Conciliator."

SYDENHAM, George Sydenham Clarke, First Baron: Leading "ultra."

WOOD, Kingsley: M.P., 1918-; Parliamentary private secretary to the Minister of Health, 1919-22; Under-Secretary for the Ministry of Health, 1924-29. "Rightist."

WORTHINGTON-EVANS, Laming: M.P.; Minister of Blockade, 1918; Minister of Pensions, 1919-20; Minister without Portfolio, 1920-21; Secretary of State for War, 1921-22, 1924-29. "Centrist."

YOUNG, Edward Hilton: M.P., -1923, 1924-; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1921-22. "Conciliator."

YOUNGER of Leckie, George Younger, First Viscount: M.P., -1922; Chairman of the Conservative party, -1923; Treasurer of the Conservative party, 1923-29.

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